TERRORISM'S EFFECT ON FUTURE GAMES PG. 28

GAME INFORMER®

The Final Word On Computer & Video Games

GAMECUBE VS XBOX

THE SHOWDOWN OF THE CENTURY FEATURING DEAD OR ALIVE 3 AND LUIGI'S MANSION

ISSUE 103

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NOVEMBER 2001


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PlayStation.2

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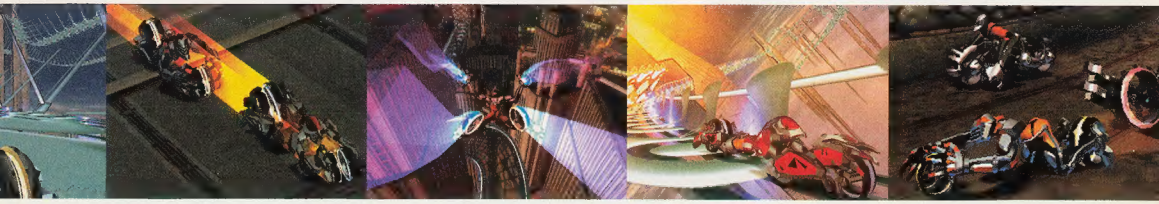
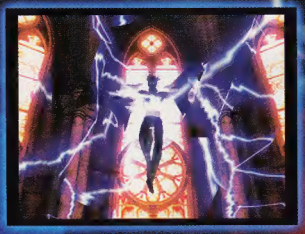
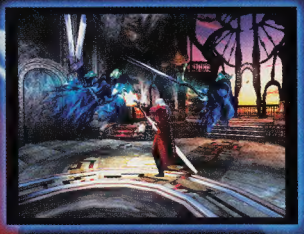


Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

THE DEVIL DOESN'T KNOW IT YET,
BUT THERE'S A BULLET
WITH HIS NAME ON IT.





Blood
Violence

PlayStation 2


CONS AGO, IN THE DARKEST REACHES OF HELL, A DEMON SWORDSMAN NAMED SPARDA WAGED A ONE-MAN WAR TO SAVE THE HUMAN WORLD FROM DAMNATION. 2000 YEARS LATER, A SHADOWY FIGURE NAMED DANTE FINDS CLUES THAT THE DEVIL WILL RISE UP AGAIN. SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A MAN AND A DEMON LIES OUR ONLY HOPE FOR SALVATION.
Devil May Cry
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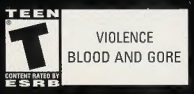
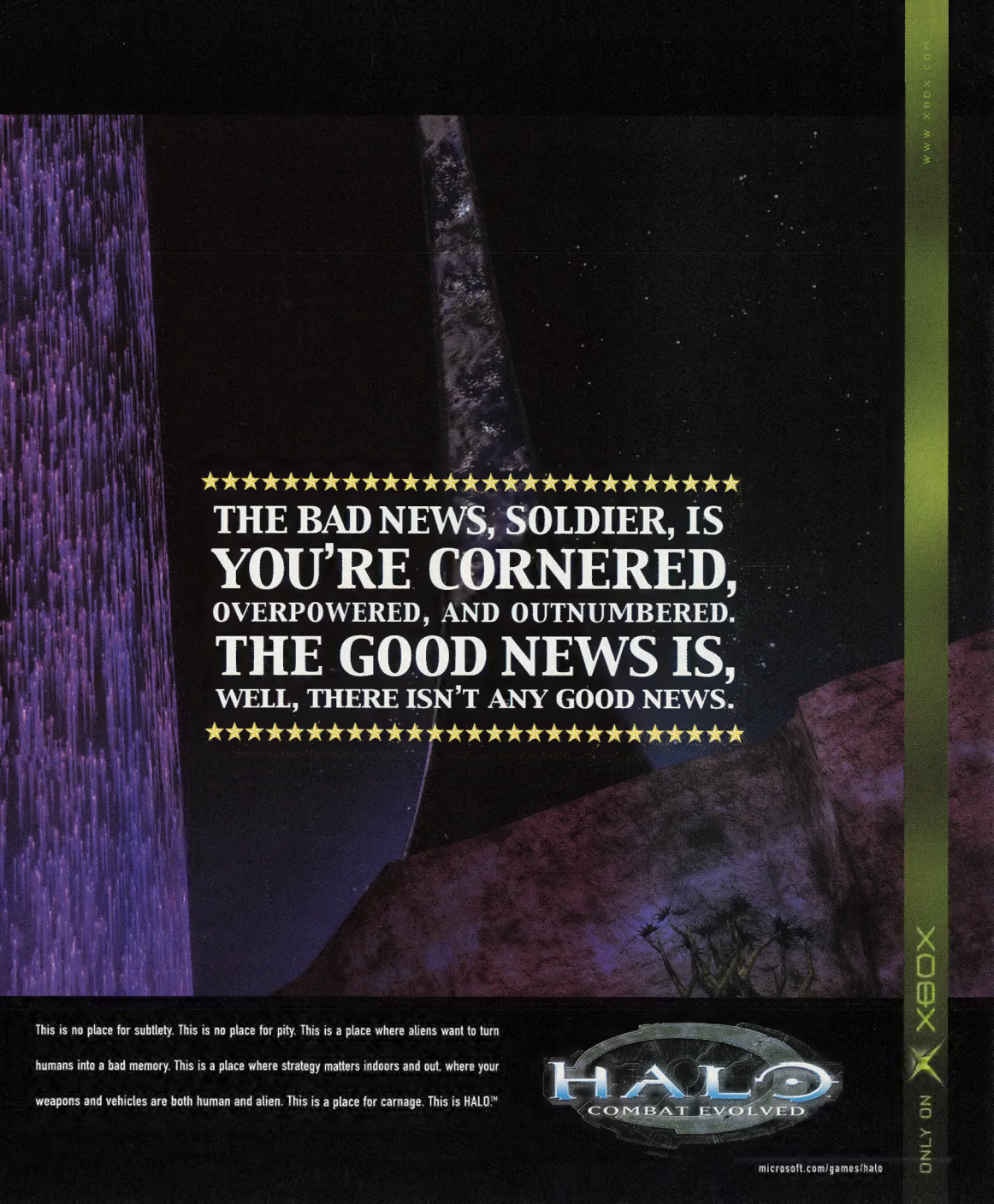


VIOLENCE
BLOOD AND GORE

BUNGIE


THE BAD NEWS, SOLDIER, IS
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WELL, THERE ISN'T ANY GOOD NEWS.
This is no place for subtlety. This is no place for pity. This is a place where aliens want to turn humans into a bad memory. This is a place where strategy matters indoors and out, where your weapons and vehicles are both human and alien. This is a place for carnage. This is HALO.™
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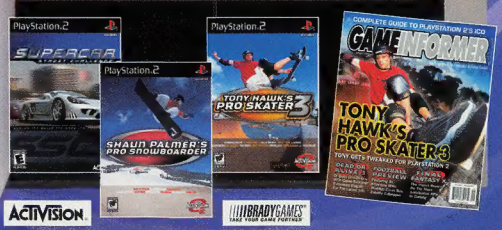

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ABBREVIATED RULES FOR GAME INFORMER "NEXT LEVEL OF GAMING" SWEEPSTAKES

[illegible]

GAMEINFORMER

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We have at last embarked upon the next great console battle. Hundreds of millions of dollars are hanging in the balance as Microsoft's Xbox and Nintendo's GameCube vie for their place in history. You've heard all the hype, now find out the truth as we put both of these systems under the microscope and give you the inside scoop on what we've found.

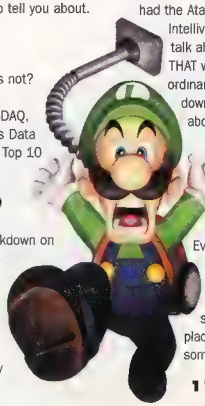
FEATURE
52 THE GAMES OF XBOX

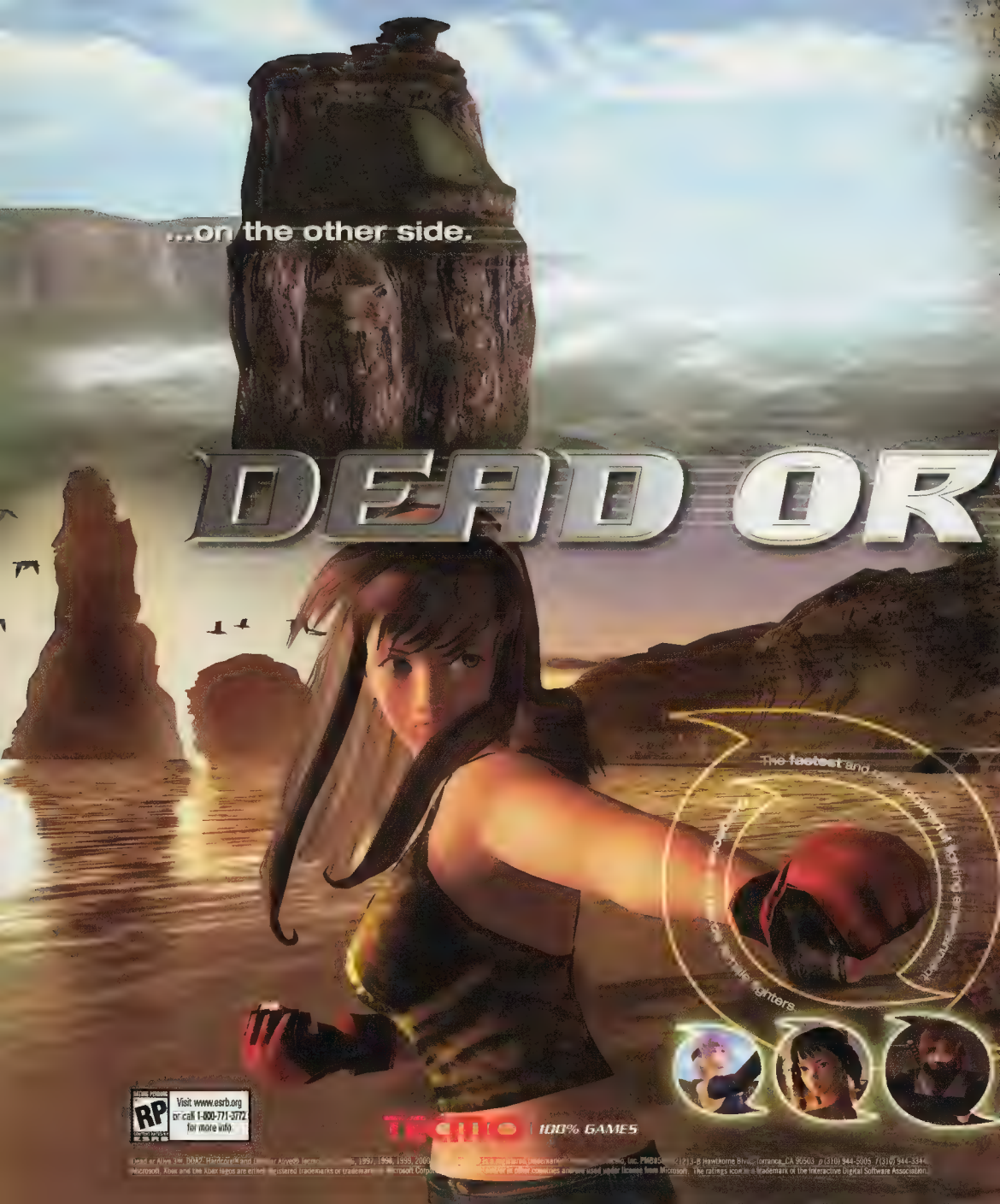
We've taken the Xbox's life force – its games – and compiled a detailed breakdown of each title you should look out for. There are things you'll want to see before you open your wallet, and we have an eyeful for you. Buckle up!

FEATURE
68 THE GAMES OF GAMECUBE

Are you wondering what the best and brightest are for Nintendo's new baby? We've saved you the trouble of all that frustrating research by including every game you should take a second look at in one action-packed segment. Oh, how we spoil you.

GAME INDEX

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EDITORS' FORUM

LONG LIVE VIDEO GAMES

This letter from the editor is perhaps the hardest I have ever had to write, as at the time I write this we are still lost in the wake of the New York tragedy. I know I speak for the entire staff when I send our best wishes to all during these trying times, but the fact of the matter is we have to move on. For us (and our readers), this means getting back to the business of video games no matter how hard that might be.

The video game industry heralds the arrival of two new consoles this month as we move into the big holiday season. This is great news for gamers everywhere, and we're going to see a deluge of great new product and gaming experiences to enjoy. It's also bad news for many, since there isn't a budget big enough to cover it all. From hot new releases on PS2 and PC, to the new hardware platforms GameCube and Xbox, there is so much stellar gaming going on that about the only way you can enjoy it all is to work at a video game magazine (and that job, my friends, is already taken).

Understanding your current ordeal, this month we have put together all the ammo you will need to make your oh-so-important video game buying decisions over the coming months. Whether you plan to buy an Xbox or GameCube, or just stick to your PS2 or PC, you'll want to take the time to read up on all the latest developments on all fronts.

Be well my friends, and enjoy the issue.

Andy McNamara
Editor
andy@gameinformer.com

THE MOVE TO NEW OFFICES OFFERS ANDY THE CHANCE TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY.

"WITH THE NEW STATE OF THE ART VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM I INSTALLED, I CAN **FINALLY** SEE WHAT MY EDITORS ARE UP TO DURING THE WORKDAY!"

Camera 1: *Reiner puts himself $389,763.21 in debt day-trading.* ***Camera 2:*** *Kato downloads pictures and continues his futile email correspondence with Danni Ashe.* ***Cameras 3 & 4:*** *Jay and Justin disagree over who gets the last bag of Doritos.* ***Camera 5:*** *Kristian catches up on his sleep.* ***Camera 6:*** *Matt logs on to Napster and downloads 450 gigabytes of MP3 music by his favorite band, Saliva. Since Napster is no longer free, he charges it to the company.*

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

reiner@gameinformer.com

If my math is correct, you'll need approximately $1,000 to snag all the new games and systems launching this holiday season. If you can't swing this, and can only pick up one console, the PlayStation 2 is the smart investment. Certainly, I'm impressed with the GameCube and Xbox, but their software libraries don't hold a candle to Sony's this early on. If you already own a PS2, the Xbox's launch lineup is impressive, but you have to consider longevity. Nintendo holds the exclusive rights to the Resident Evil series, and its first-party software simply crushes Microsoft's. If I had to choose just one, the GameCube, although somewhat blasé right now, will deliver the most hits.

MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER

matt@gameinformer.com

It's been sort of strange going through the motions of writing a video game magazine with all the tragic events unfolding in the last few weeks. I guess I just can't get myself worked into a lather about crappy 3DO games when thousands of people are either dead or unaccounted for. But, crushing ants with hammers is what I get paid to do, so rest assured that I shall carry on in my relentless quest to nitpick the dark forces in the video game industry into oblivion. In any case, I hope all your loved ones are safe and sound, and that this issue finds you well. Over and out. P.S. Slayer rules!

JAY, THE GONZO GAMER

jay@gameinformer.com

As November draws near, the ever-increasing question on the email servers has been, 'Which system is the best?' Well, after taking the time to go elbow-deep into the current crop of Xbox, PlayStation 2, and GameCube software, I can honestly say that I have no idea. To tell the truth, I have even less idea of what the answer to that perennial question is than when all these consoles were first announced. They're all great. Luckily, you're all rich like me and can afford to buy them all. Aw heck, why not buy two in case one breaks? Now if you'll excuse me, I have to have my limo driver go pick up some new platinum bars to replace the old ones I've tired of.

KRISTIAN, THE GAME DAWG

kristian@gameinformer.com

I had an experience today I haven't been through since my childhood days: I had an honest-to-goodness tantrum while playing a game. It was Bomberman Online, for those of you who are just dying to know what brought it on. I kept getting bombed in this danged water level and before I knew it I had virtually put my fist through my desk, thereby awakening Jay from his daily nap. In light of this, I am hereby banning myself from all further Bomberman games, as it seems my fragile ego can't take three cel-shaded fish-like things getting the best of me. And now my friends, I'm off to drive in rush-hour traffic.

JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT

justin@gameinformer.com

I get major heat from the rest of the editorial monkeys for my appreciation of Henry Rollins. As you already know from reading this fine publication, they don't know what they're talking about. After being a fan of his music (Black Flag included), books, and spoken word for over a decade, I finally got to see him live. The new album's material was rockin', and the whole show was intense and incredible, especially from the point of view of the blue-haired guy front and center, going off to every single song. Thanks for your 40 years of service, Hank. And readers, have your pets spayed or neutered. Animals are far too cool to rot in cells their whole lives.

KATO, THE GAME KATANA

kato@gameinformer.com

A source has told me that Subway's diet poster-boy Jared is about to crack. Despite losing 245 pounds and becoming an overnight celebrity, the pressure of stardom and keeping up appearances are starting to wear on the man. It's all he can do not to choke himself with donuts as soon as the camera is off. Do you know what happened to the boy who got everything he ever wanted? He was found in the street with pastry crumbs on his face and wearing only one shoe. In more happy news, I can say that Xbox is pleasantly surprising, while Nintendo's signing of Resident Evil has me bouncing off the walls. Got a sibling? Why not cash in one of their kidneys and just buy both systems?

11.08.01

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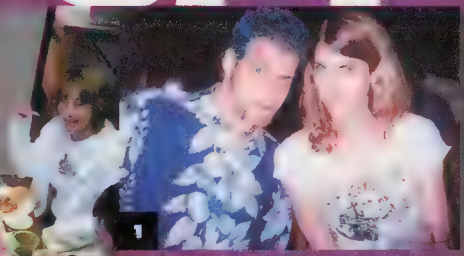
XBOX

GI SPY



CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

1 Justin represents with Ubi Soft's Kristen Hecht. Despite Kristen's dope Led Zeppelin shirt, we can assure you that no one engaged in any lemon squeezing on the night in question. **2** As construction begins on GI's new offices, these hearty workmen use a crane to bring in a precious load of sheet (rock, that is). **3** Surprising most Vegas oddsmakers, Kato took home the coveted Park Tavern T-shirt for bowling the best game at the recent First Annual Game Informer [illegible] are crazy in America? Peep the massive throng of folks who lined up to buy the GameCube on day one in Tokyo. **5** Marcus Camby of the Knicks takes it to the house during a game of NBA 2K2 at the Sega Sports Summit in New York. **6** The Gonzo Gamer demonstrates a disturbing lack of table manners as he celebrates a paintball victory in rural Wisconsin. Next up for GI's Renaissance (fair) man – Civil War reenactments!! **7** Even though Frederrick Jones (Terminal Reality, Khameleon Entertainment) looks pretty suave, he's just a big comic book dork like the rest of us. **8** In our ongoing efforts to determine whether Popeye's or KFC is the best, the GI staff engages in some serious fried chicken research. Unfortunately, Matt got salmonella and died, so we've hired Dean R. Koontz to ghost write for him in future issues of GI.


DAY 20:
Weak. Tired. Fought noreths all day by mixing fire and earth elements. Smell like crap. Need shower.
DAY 27:
Had run-in with sleeth. Killed him with axion. Pants ruined. Damn.
DAY 30:
Discovered "fire" realm t
that. Sweated out 5 p
Still haven't showered
It's a journey to save a world, and all you have is your trusty axion. Combine the elements of fire, water, earth, and air to fight and explore your way through the 6 vast realms of Perathia. Prevent the apocalypse and, well, survive.
TEEN
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VIOLENCE
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DEAR GI

ADRIAN!!!

I was wondering if there was ever a Rocky game. When I say Rocky, I don't mean Rocky Horror Picture Show or Rocky and Bullwinkle, I mean Rocky Balboa. You know, from Rocky, Rocky II, Rocky III...

D12NJD
Via hotmail.com

Rocky Super Action Boxing – ColecoVision

Rocky Sega Master System

Rocky – PS2/Xbox

All right, already! We know what Rocky you're talking about. Geez! Yes, there have been Rocky video games. Rocky Super Action Boxing was released for ColecoVision in 1983, and Rocky for the Sega Master System came out in 1987. Neither was the most exciting boxing title in the world. Perhaps the new Rocky game that Rage Software is working on for PlayStation 2 and Xbox will do justice to the Italian Stallion. Nothing would make us happier than giving a next-gen black eye to that snotty commie, Drago. Not Drago the Dragon from that one Spider-Man follow-along record book or the Drago restaurant in St Petersburg, Russia. We mean Ivan Drago, played by Dolph Lundgren...

NEVER FORGET THE GREATS

I hate what Microsoft and Sony are doing to video games. They're making people forget about Nintendo, one of the staples of the industry. From Game Boy to GameCube, Nintendo has proven that it's capable of making some amazing video games. Nintendo has been in the business for 20 years. Sony hasn't even been in it for ten years yet, and Microsoft has no console making history whatsoever. I'm already upset with Sony for putting Sega out of business, but if it shuts out Nintendo from consoles I'll be really pissed. I've been playing Nintendo systems my whole life, and I don't want to see all of its hard work wasted by two software giants.

Ian Malloch
Via hotmail.com

Let us pose a question to you, Ian. If Nintendo could make the world forget about Microsoft and Sony, would it? The answer, in case you didn't know, is an overwhelming yes. If you don't believe us, you need look no farther back than 1986 when Nintendo released the NES nationally, and gave its all to bury every comeback attempt by Atari (although admittedly, Atari did a fine job of burying itself). Competition is a part of business, and we're sure Nintendo, as well as Microsoft and Sony, can handle themselves just fine. And speaking of Atari...

IRONY

I just want to say that PlayStation is way overrated. Sure, it may have thousands of games, but if you really look at them, you'll see that little time and effort are spent on them.

Anyway, I recently purchased an Atari Jaguar. If you could insert an article on it into an upcoming issue of GI, I would really appreciate it.

PS-X Hater
Via yahoo.com

When there's a system that's popular with third-party publishers, the quality of games will invariably range from horrid to hallowed. Usually, though, there will be just as many fantastic titles as there are stinkers. Every console manufacturer seeks outside software publishers to help beef up its library of games. How bad can a console with no third-party support be? Have fun finding out with that Jaguar, buddy!

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

I love your magazine, and I hope you can answer my questions.

1. I already have a DSL for my computer, so will I be able to just plug my line into the PlayStation 2 when the network adapter comes out?

2. The disc tray on my PS2 doesn't always close all the way. It touches the machine, but comes out again a second later. I can make it stay by pushing it a little to make it lock into the machine. Is there any way to fix this, or can I only be careful and not make it worse? Thanks!

Eric Stewart
Whoha, USA

We love you, so we'll answer your questions.

1. Yes, you will be able to plug the same DSL line that's in the back of your computer into your Xbox (which comes broadband ready) or the appropriate adapters for PlayStation 2 and GameCube. Of course, getting online for the first time takes more than just plugging a phone line into your console and firing it up. There's confusing configurations aplenty to be made, and the winner in this upcoming online console battle may be the company that makes getting started the simplest for its users.

2. To allow for faster disc access speed, PlayStation 2 uses a sliding tray as opposed to the top-loading model of its predecessor. As you've discovered, Eric, the downfall of this design is that it's more prone to malfunctions. To find out if there's a way to remedy your problem without having to open up your PS2, we called Gamestop's refurbishment headquarters in Texas. The very experienced people we spoke with recommended you shut your PS2 off with the disc drawer open. Then, very gently pull the tray forward. You may hear some clicking from internal gears jumping. This should reset the drawer's position, allowing it to close without assistance. If this method doesn't work, then the problem is likely something more than a layman can fix, and it's time to bring your PS2 into a professional.

STEAL THIS IDEA

The people who made RPG Maker should do a title where you make whatever kind of game you want with whatever kind of look you want. When you're done, you put your own logo at the bottom of the screen so you can say, "This is my game!" You don't save your game on a memory card, it's saved on a disc, and you get to make your own CD cover! What do ya think?

Passing4Insane
Via aol.com

We think your idea's already been taken. It's called working for a software company. However, there's some key gameplay elements you've overlooked, such as meeting insane deadlines set by your publisher, continuously working overtime designing graphic tools for new consoles every few years, and waiting forever to collect royalty checks. Fun, huh?

WONDERSWAN A LAME DUCK?

Whatever happened to the WonderSwan Color? I thought it was going to release in the US.

Orio!es809
Via aol.com

Although this affordable handheld gives Game Boy Advance a healthy run for its money in Japan, a Bandai spokesperson to whom we posed your question told us, "There are no plans to bring the WonderSwan Color to the US."

The most likely reason for this is Nintendo's stranglehold on the handheld market in the US. SNK's Neo Geo Pocket Color survived but a year in this tough-to-enter arena, giving Bandai plenty of reason for reservation. So if you're amongst the many Americans that have been just jonesin' to play Space Battleship Yamato, you'll have to import the WonderSwan Color from Japan.

WINNING NOT FUN

I heard that back in the day trying to win contests was fun. Your contests always suck. All you have people do is mail in a letter or drop an email. How hard is that? I think you should try to be a little more creative with all of your contests.

N. Combs
Stickinthemud, GA

When contests started becoming a regular part of GI News, we felt it was unfair to eliminate people based on our subjective tastes. We want everyone to get a shot at this swag, so that's why we create an even playing field where anyone can win.

Besides, there's plenty of other places in the mag where those with a creative slant can show their stuff. Envelope Art, Reader Top 5, Greatest Game of All Time, and R&D are all assembled from our readership, and we highly encourage people to send or email us submissions for these sections. Jay often ships out some pretty sweet prize packages – always including a couple games – to those who get in the magazine in his continuing quest to clear off his desk.

If it makes you feel any better, Mr. Combs, we'll make sure you never win any of our uncreative contests. Better odds for everyone else!

Send your comments to Game Informer **Snail Mail:** Game Informer Magazine • Attn: Dear GI • 724 North First St., 4th Floor • Minneapolis, MN 55401 **Email:** deargi@gameinformer.com

THE BIG QUESTION

How many games do you guys have? I have about 41 PS-X games and a couple PS2 games. Am I wack?

Cartoonic
Via aol.com

You're in luck. During our recent move from Eden Prairie to Minneapolis we had to box up and tally every single game that's come our way in the last ten years. And the grand total is (drum roll, please)...5,244. Of course, this only counts finished, in the package, games. If we were to include all the unfinished, early versions of games that we've saved, the number would be upwards of 10,000!

Are you wack for having less than 1% the amount of games we have? Nah. Having to pack up and move three tons of discs and cartridges in two days – now that's wack.

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Final Fantasy Chronicles was a great idea. The thought of owning two fantastic classics in one package was unbelievable to me. In any event, I was just thinking how great it would be if they came out with something called Legends of Zelda for the GameCube. Hopefully this would include at least the two greatest classics of the series: The Legend of Zelda and The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past. I was wondering if you guys might have heard of Nintendo doing anything like this.

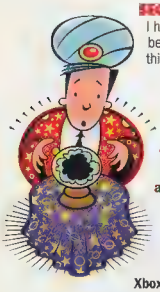
Rob Garvey
New York

It seems a lot of publishers are in re-release fever mode lately, doesn't it? As long as the games that rise to the surface again are great ones, though, we're all for it. Nintendo hasn't given any official word on a collection like you describe, but we're sure you'll be seeing some classic Zeldas reappear in the next few years. However, such a game's destination would more likely be Game Boy Advance. Of course, were you also to own a GameCube, you'd be able to plug your GBA into a controller port and play this theoretical Zelda on your television. We, like you, can't wait.

SECRETS REVEALED!

I heard PlayStation 3 is already being made. Is there any truth to this rumor?

Havoc119er
Via aol.com



Kind of. No company concentrates solely on the present. To be successful as a business, you must make plans that reach ahead many years. In Sony Computer Entertainment's case, this means thinking about the PlayStation 3. By the same token, Microsoft is probably already roughing out ideas for Xbox 2, and Nintendo certainly has the successor to GameCube on the drawing board. Understand, though, that everything regarding these future consoles are no more than rough ideas on paper. It will be years before concrete information and official details start trickling out.

?????

Death to the palm trees!

Kugeebow
Via aol.com

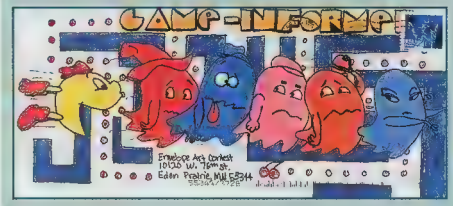
As residents of the midwest, we have only one response to that. What the hell are palm trees?

ENVELOPE ART

Richard Evans
"Close the doors! Slimer farted!"

NOVEMBER WINNER!

Bissan al Hussein
"Oops! I farted! Hee hee!"



Traci Habenicht
Pac-Man in pursuit of Stinky, Pooey, Eggy, Farty, and Sulphura.

Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit, or carve the best darn envelope art you can think of and send it to us. Please include your name, phone number, and return address on the back of the envelope. If you're the monthly winner, we'll feature your work in GI and you'll receive a video game prize from the Game Informer vault.

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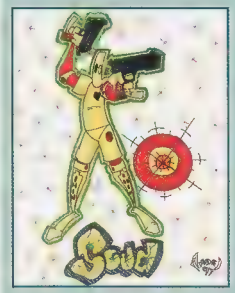
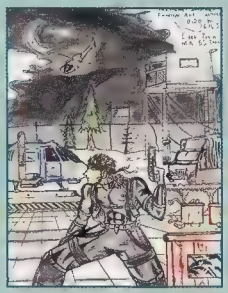
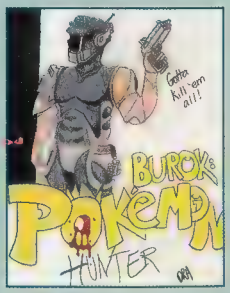


Unknown
The Disposable Assassin? More like The Silent But Deadly Assassin!



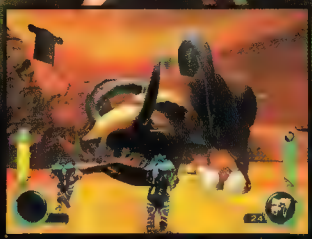
Felin M. Almonte
"<Sniff> <Sniff> Have I stumbled across an enemy methane laboratory?"

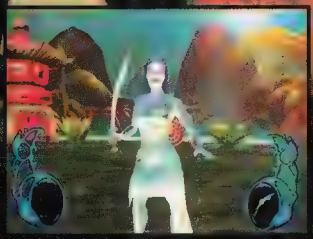


David Hovey
"I choose you, Fartachu...to die!!!"

GIANTS
CITIZEN KABUTO

PREPARE TO GET BLOWN AWAY.
— DAILY RADAR





PlayStation.2


Estard Isle
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PlayStation


TEEN
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SEPTEMBER 11 DISASTER EFFECTS INDUSTRY

GI SPECIAL REPORT

The shocking events of September 11 have changed this country forever. Apart from the sorrow we feel for loved ones and as Americans, the day-to-day landscape has been altered. In the short term, it has meant a downturn for the stock market, a need for a $15 billion bailout of the entire airline industry, and massive employment layoffs. In the long term, it will certainly mean a change in the world's political climate, and could even result in a reduction of our civil liberties. Every sector of our lives has been touched in some way, and the ripples of this terrorism have reverberated as far as the video game industry itself.

In the days immediately following the attacks on New York City and Washington DC, there was a variety of reactions by game developers and producers. At the most fundamental level, the release of several games was halted, due simply to the fact that they were initially scheduled to come out during the Federal Aviation Administration's closure of all airports following the attacks.

Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2

Games that were already in the stores were affected as well. Almost across the board, retailers began pulling Electronic Arts' PC title Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2, whose cover coincidentally depicted the World Trade Center (WTC) exploding. Soon after C&C: RA2 was taken off the shelves, EA recalled all the store copies and prepared an undisclosed alternate cover to be sent in their stead. Microsoft went even further in its response to the controversy surrounding its Flight Simulator 2000. After it was learned that the hijackers had some computer-simulated flight training (although it has never been proven that this involved Microsoft's product), and that the title allowed you to fly a Boeing 767 into the Twin Towers, the game was pulled from stores all over the world. The company then held back the October release of Flight Simulator 2002 in order to remove the buildings. Still, Microsoft spokesperson Matt Pilla said that the series would remain fundamentally unchanged in the future. "Flight Simulator was designed to be a realistic program that is helpful to pilots and to aviation enthusiasts, and we want it to be realistic."


Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000

Game Informer contacted several different local retailers and found a variety of responses to the situation. Although most of them did remove the above games, the stance from the headquarters of retail chains such as Best Buy, Wal-Mart, and Target was cautious but not one of overreaction. Best Buy's policy echoed that of others. "At this point we're just cooperating with the different vendors," said spokesperson Anna Beadle. "If we get any other sorts of complaints or issues brought to our attention, then we'll review them as necessary." In fact, at the store level, there was often managerial discretion. We did find stores that were continuing to sell both C&C:RA2 and Flight Simulator 2000, as well as others that some stores had removed, such as PlayStation 2's helicopter rescue game City Crisis.

Out of respect, several publishers and developers began changing to-be-released games, whether they actually depicted the towers, or were thought to be potentially disturbing. Konami's PS2 title Metal Gear Solid 2 was rumored to be in danger of being held back from the States despite its theme of peace, but was then changed to just remove the WTC. Similar cosmetic alterations had to be performed on Xbox's Project Gotham Racing, PS-X's Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro from Activision, and Rockstar Games' PS 2 pair Grand Theft Auto and Smuggler's Run 2 (now shipping at the end of October). Some, such as the Sony PS-X sequel Syphon Filter 3, or JoWooD's real-time strategy PC title, WW3 Black Gold, were being held back indefinitely until an appropriate time to resume their promotional campaigns. Sony's Patrick Seybold assured us, however, that the former would remain unchanged. "We're not even going to be changing the code for Syphon 3, it's just a matter of the advertising and marketing efforts."

Some companies even self-censored titles that were in no way related to the week's violence. Electronic Arts temporarily suspended its service on the immersive, online conspiracy game Majestic, due to worries that its use of contacting players through familiar communication devices, including personalized instant messages, faxes, and phone calls, would be unwanted during the crashes' initial aftermath. It was also thought that the frantic, frightened phone calls users sometimes received as part of the game experience would remind people of the chaos on the streets of New York. Majestic later resumed, and players were able to come back when they felt they were ready. Similarly, Sega postponed the shipment of Propeller Arena: Aviation Battle Championship for the Dreamcast simply because it staged some of its aerial dogfights in fictional skyscraper-laden locations.


Spider-Man: The Movie

Video games have been just one type of entertainment media that has performed this kind of pull back in the wake of the terrorist attacks. Trailers for next summer's *Spider-Man* movie had to be yanked because it depicted a helicopter caught in webbing between the Twin Towers, while Arnold Schwarzenegger will have to fight terrorists in an LA

skyscraper another time. His film *Collateral Damage* has been postponed indefinitely. GameStop's Vice President John Woodson thinks that all entertainment media will be in the same boat during a sort of self-imposed quiet period. "We will mirror the rest of the [media] world. I think you're going to see advertising toned down through the remainder of this year. I think people are pretty understanding of this and they understand that there's plenty of marketing material throughout the United States, not just video games, that could potentially be offensive." In fact, the gaming industry has already mirrored the world by trying to do its part to help in dealing with the crisis. Many retail, company, and even fan sites have provided links on their websites to charity organizations such as the Red Cross in an attempt to pitch in and support the cause one person at a time. Microsoft alone made a $10 million donation in cash and technical services to the relief and recovery efforts.

Even though a link between these events and any software titles is nonexistent – even for Flight Simulator 2000 – "video game violence" is a label that politicians and the larger media sometimes like to get hold of. Lobbying for the industry, Doug Lowenstien, President of the Interactive Digital Software Association, commented, "Nobody would seriously suggest a video game has a role in this kind of tragedy." Still, could the aftermath of these events prompt a game-developing mood that is more sensitive to violence, given the tremendously shocking events in NY, DC, and Pennsylvania that played out on televisions the world over? "I think that this particular event in our history is going to have a much larger effect in people's minds for a much longer period of time than any of the other things we'll face, certainly," said Sierra's Senior Director of PR, Kathy Miller. "From that perspective, I think we'll look at things differently, but will it change the future or the success of anything? I don't think so."

Despite the hopes of the industry to remain creatively unchanged, the sheer magnitude of this tragedy is too large not to have an effect on all segments of our country. The content of entertainment forms such as movies, music, and video games often mirrors the hot- or cold-war climate of a nation. For instance, the mid-80s saw the Soviets as our enemy, and the media forms we used and watched told us no different. Censorship of content may not be a concern for those in game development, but perhaps a reverse effect will take place whereby Muslims or those of Arabic ethnicity are the new target. Obviously fighting terrorism has already been the focus of many titles on the market well before these events occurred, but things have radically changed. We have already seen incidents in America of retaliation against Arab-Americans merely because of their race or faith, and there is no place for this misguided hatred in any video game.

Such thoughts may seem far-fetched, but the thinking of every citizen of this country is now in a state that was previously unimaginable only months before. The video game industry is just one of many others that has coped with the short-term fallout with an endurance and compassion mirrored by the entire nation's character. As America moves forward, these traits will be just as necessary in determining how the future is played out.

RESIDENT EVIL NOW NINTENDO EXCLUSIVE

Striking a bold move for **Nintendo** and its **GameCube** console, the company has exclu[illegible] **Capcom's *Resident Evil*** series. This deal not only includes future titles in the fr[illegible] ***Resident Evil 4*** and ***Resident Evil Zero***, but will also encom[illegible] through survival horror property. [illegible] releasing in Japan [illegible] 2. The prec[illegible] ***RE 2***, ***RE 3: Nemesis***, and ***RE Code: Veronica*** [illegible] to appear on **PlayStation 2**. [illegible] bolsters the [illegible] would [illegible] support. As users behind [illegible] **Shinji Mikami** (right), expressed his support of the GameCube. "Everyone must be surprised because the *RE* series is now on the GameCube, but I have a clear and strong opinion about being able to enjoy all of the games on one system," Nintendo's **Shigeru Miyamoto** (left) was more than happy to help. "Mikami and Capcom expressed their wish to create the ***Biohazard*** series [as *Resident Evil* is known in Japan. -ed.] for Nintendo GameCube and we will provide them with full support." For more on the remake of the original *Resident Evil*, check out loads of pictures and info on page 69.

XBOX LAUNCH DELAYED

The debut of **Microsoft's Xbox** has been delayed from November 8 to November 15. This move comes shortly after **Nintendo** announced it was pushing back the release of **GameCube** till November 18. Now Microsoft's system will hit the streets a few days earlier than Nintendo's, instead of the other way around.

This development comes on the heels of strong speculation that the Xbox would not make its self-projected launch numbers of around 750,000 units on day one. *Game Informer* spoke with Microsoft Group Games PF Manager **David Hufford**, who talked about the reasons behind the delay. "It had nothing to do with [Nintendo]. There were many factors in our decision to move it back. You really can't pin it on any one thing. We certainly want to have the strongest launch possible, and we felt the best thing to do was to give it another week." As far as a specific number of units on November 15, he wouldn't comment other than to use the launch of the **PlayStation 2** as an example. "We don't want to repeat what happened last year with the sort of launch it and leave it thing that happened to gamers last holiday."

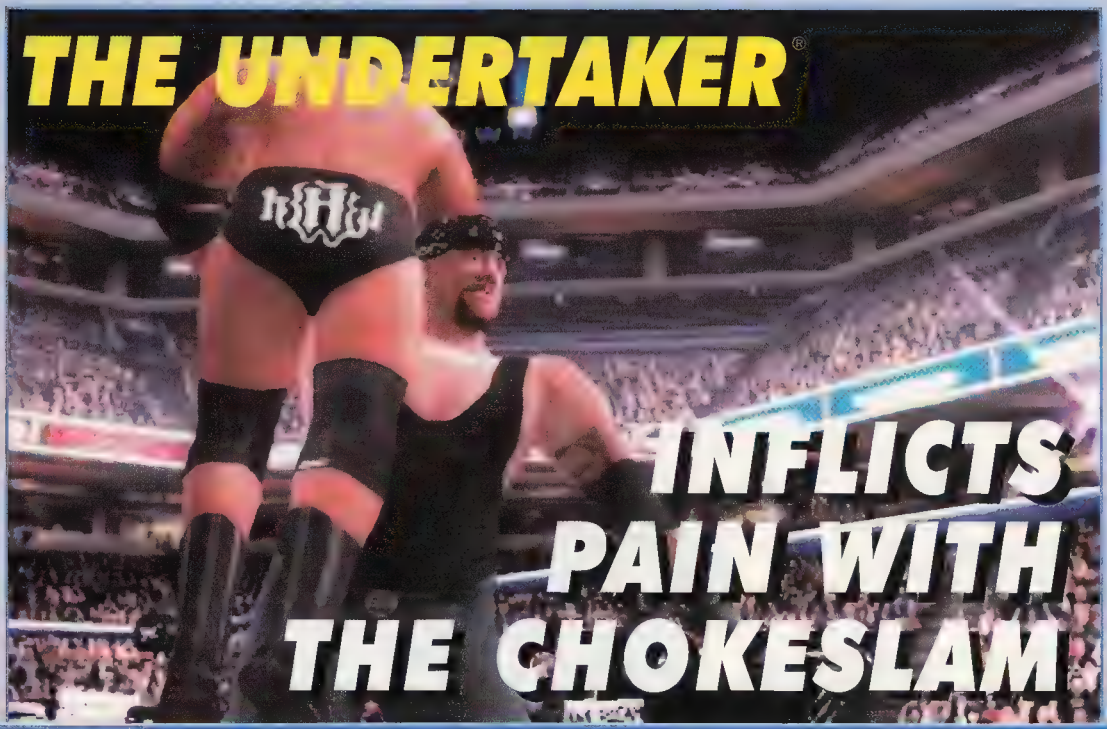
If production of the platform is a problem, Microsoft already has plants in Mexico and Hungary to meet the need. One hundred thousand Xbox units are expected to ship each week after launch, culminating in 1 to 1.5 million systems by the end of the year. Insiders tell *GI* that November 15 could see as few as 300,000 units, making one wonder about the chance of filling all the pre-orders for the platform, as well as satisfying walk-in customers.

"Manufacturing starts out crawling," said Hufford, in characterizing production of the console. "Then you get to walking, and then you get to running. We've already moved beyond the crawl stage and we're hoping to get running very quickly." For more on the Xbox launch and what software to expect, turn to page 42.

SIX-MAN TAG TEAM WHIPS CROWD INTO FRENZY

THE SMACKDOWN! NEWS

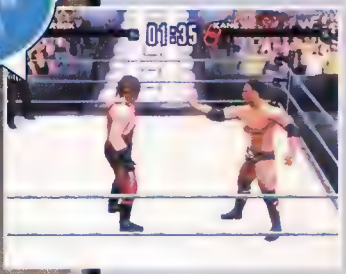
Where Anything's Possible



TAZZ™ AND MICHAEL COLE CALL

THE RINGSIDE ACTION

Chaos spills out onto the streets!



WWF SMACKDOWN! JUST BRING IT

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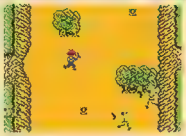
INDIE PRO WRESTLER

Part sim, part role-playing, and part fighting game, Indie Pro Wrestler puts you about as far away as possible from being in the big leagues to see if you're tough enough to make it all the way. Players create a person whose only wrestling experience consists of watching matches and dreaming big. Then it's off to school (perhaps as part of an extended gameplay tutorial) to learn simple holds and how to take a bump.

With your basics in place, you begin wrestling matches in barely populated venues, learning new moves while trying to maintain a day job and stay in shape. If you can make it through this grueling beginning without suffering a career-ending injury, you'll eventually climb through the indie politics and be able to have matches whenever you want. At this point, you have to decide if you want to become an underground sensation in the US, or take a crash course in cross-cultural entertainment in Japan, Mexico, or another foreign land. Of course, your ultimate goal in Indie Pro Wrestler is to make it to a major federation, where you'll once again have to work your way up from the bottom of the card.

Completing a wrestler's career would take months of playtime, and the ultimate game would see your creation outlive his or her days in the ring, becoming a personality of legendary proportions. Sound like a lot of work for just one wrestler? It is, but if you don't have the guts to start, you don't have what it takes to be an Indie Pro Wrestler.

NAME THAT GAME



Early home console games weren't as good as in the arcade, but ColecoVision's Super Action controllers helped make this title a great conversion. Your mission in this top-scroller was to commandeer either light or heavy tanks on your way to destroying the enemy command post. Get hit yourself and you'd have mere seconds to eject and continue the battle on foot. Although ported to Atari's 2600, the ColecoVision's controller was key to your continua. movement and efforts to stay alive.

(Answer on page 38)

SEGA'S GAME GEAR RETURNS!

Sega has announced a partnership with multimedia wireless provider **Synovial** in an effort to expand Sega titles onto a wide variety of platforms such as cell phones and PDAs sometime in the future. The first project for the pair is the resurrection of **Game Gear**, a Sega handheld system that debuted back in 1991. **Virtual Game Gear** will work with **PocketPCs** to bring you titles such as ***Sonic the Hedgehog*** and ***Baku Baku Animal*** via emulation software. Sega plans to offer additional, unspecified software packages through Internet downloads. At the recent **Sega Sports Summit**, **Sega of America President**, **Peter Moore**, explained that due to licensing fees and the gameplay controls involved, sports titles in particular weren't included in its plans.

SQUARE'S MAGIC KINGDOM

Kingdom Hearts, the fall 2002 **PlayStation 2** collaboration between **Square Soft** and **Disney**, is already full of famous characters, but the roster is getting more impressive by the minute. Joining Goofy, Donald Duck, and others will be ***Final Fantasy X's*** Tidus (bottom left) and Wakka (bottom right, holding ball), and ***Final Fantasy VIII's*** Selphie Tilmit. These *FF* characters will all know each other and travel together, with Selphie being the leader of this gang. Exactly how they are familiar with the Disney bunch isn't known yet, although Tidus and company will share *Kingdom Hearts'* youthful vibe by appearing in kid form and possessing different outfits and weapons. Other Square video game alumni may also be added to the title.

XBOX ADDS FIRST-PARTY FAVORS

Microsoft is attempting to bolster its first-party software case by recruiting five developers that will now create titles exclusively for the upcoming **Xbox** under the Microsoft label. Knowing it's games that make or break a console, Vice President of **Xbox Games Publishing**, **Ed Fries**, recently said, "We are committed as ever to providing gamers with experiences that were never possible before Xbox. One of the first steps to success is gathering top industry talent that share our creative vision." No titles have been officially announced by the developers at this time.

- **Argonaut Games:** Put out both ***Crocs*** and is working on **PlayStation's** ***Harry Potter*** and ***Malice*** for **Xbox**
- **Just Add Monsters:** This studio is based in England, and is made up of former **Sony** developers who were responsible for both ***MediEvil*** games on the PlayStation
- **Mesa Logic:** Developed arcade titles such as ***Area 51***, ***Maximum Force***, and ***Site 4***
- **Presto Studios:** The people behind ***Myst III: Exile***
- **Studio Gigante:** Involved in versions of games in the ***Mortal Kombat*** and ***WWF*** series

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STREET HOOPS JOINS THE BLACKTOP

A division is working on an urban basketball game called Street Hoops for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox. Going beyond just super dunks and trash talking, the game will really put its ear to the street – including having some ballers made famous by the And 1 Mix Tapes and the Nike "freestyle" commercials. Ten real-world street parks will host Hoops' World Tournament, King of the Court, Half-Court, and Versus modes. Money will be bet on games and earnings can be spent on gear by Ecko, Pure Playaz, Sean John and more.

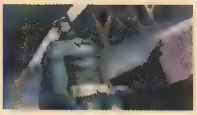
Black Ops Entertainment will be handling the 4-on-4 game, after having previously handled b-ball in NCAA March Madness 2000. Specific artists for the soundtrack haven't been announced for the title, although hip-hop sounds will be used. No specific dates have been set for either edition of Street Hoops.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

BAD – The official ***SimsVille*** site reads: "**Maxis** and the *SimsVille* team have decided to suspend development of *SimsVille*." Those on the project have been moved to other titles, including ***The Sims Online***. "Thanks for your support."

UGLY – Although we have no problems with comely babe **Britney Spears**, **THQ** has signed up the star to a **Game Boy Advance**, **PC**, and **PlayStation 2** interactive deal through 2005. Is she going to be around in 2005, or will this move just be in some future tear-jerking *Behind the Music* segment?

GOOD – The Japanese launch of the **GameCube** goes relatively nowhere. There were only 450,000 units (50,000 less than expected) and even these didn't sell out. Why is that good? Because everyone got to go home with a unit, and ***Luigi's Mansion*** still beat out any Japanese **PS2** launch title. So there.



GOOD – **Kemco's GameCube** title ***Batman: Dark Tomorrow***. Not too familiar with the publisher? Maybe you'll know the writers of the original storyline: **DC Comics**. Other familiar faces include villains such as Poison Ivy, the Ratcatcher, and Killer Croc.

BAD – The local talent at Monday's open mic amateur night at the **ACME Comedy Club** downstairs. It was so bad, the crowd was more embarrassed than the performers were – and they were probably funnier, too.

LOOSE TALK

Wherever there's a juicy rumor in the industry, Game Informer experts are on it like a fly on stink. If loose lips are spraying hot gossip, we're sucking up the secret saliva and drooling it all over this section. Loose Talk exposes inside rumors for all to see. These leads may turn out to be 100% untrue, but then again, they could also be dead honest, and you've just learned about them months before anyone else!

Waiting for the **PlayStation 2** price drop? Word is that **Sony** won't be so kind this Christmas. Due to the fact that the platform is currently the next-gen number one and that several killer titles for it are just around the corner, some at Sony feel a price drop isn't necessary to compete with the **Xbox** and **GameCube** launches.

The end is indeed near for **Sega's Dreamcast**. A source tells *Loose Talk* that the company has closed down its third-party division, leaving only Sega-made games likes ***Shenumue II*** on the docket. Titles from other companies that are already or almost complete will be shipped, but the well is drying up fast.

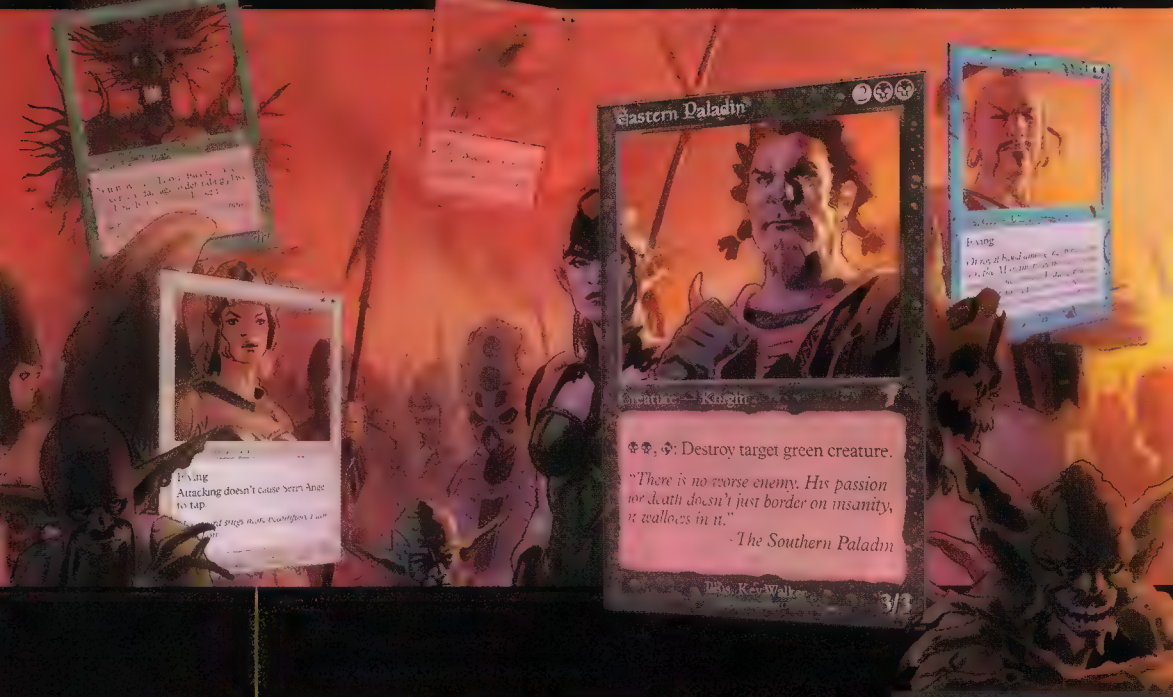
A war between **Interplay** and **Working Designs** has broken out over one of Japan's weirdest titles. ***Ka***, a **PlayStation 2** game where you terrorize a family as a mosquito (*Ka* was previewed in the September/#101 issue of *GI*), is being considered for release by the two.

Loose Talk has heard about a **3D Realms** plot to unleash a spin-off **Duke Nukem** series. The new title will involve a female character who is to appear in the upcoming **PC/GameCube/PlayStation 2** ***Duke Nukem Forever*** game. Think this killing kitten will have enough of a dirty mind and mouth to keep up with Duke?

Square and **Nintendo** may hook up after many years of hatred. Despite some recent comments to the contrary by Nintendo president **Hiroshi Yamauchi** on the subject, *Loose Talk* has heard that the **GameCube** may well see versions of ***Final Fantasy VII***, ***XI***, and a title exclusive to the system.

It wasn't long ago at **SpaceWorld** that we heard about **Left Field** working on **GameCube's *1080 Snowboarding 2***. Now it's been said that the extreme title has been mysteriously cancelled by **Nintendo**.

PLAY WITH THE BEST



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VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

Those whacked crones over at Capitol Hill don't know a thing about video games! Of course, we have a solution. Why don't we elect a gamer as President? The future would be oh so sweet! No taxes on games! All parents must play Final Fantasy for at least one hour a day! We'd even strap Senator Lieberman to a Mortal Kombat machine! The score from this quiz accurately determines which President you'll be like.

Question 1: Four years prior to NBA Jam, Midway had already released a no-rules coin-op basketball game. While Jam seemed to come out of nowhere, its founding roots directly tie into this game, yet nobody seems to remember it. Do you?

A. Hoops
B. Arch Rivals
C. Slam 'n' Jam
D. Dennis Rodman's Basketbrawl

Question 2: While Natsume will always be remembered for Harvest Moon and Legend of the River King, it has recently crossed over into the mainstream of handheld gaming as a developer who ports popular console games down to the Game Boy Color. Which of these GBC games did Natsume not develop?

A. WWF WrestleMania 2000
B. Croc 2
C. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
D. Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare

Question 3: From the planet of Melmac cometh a 229-year-old alien named Alf. Believe it or not, a developer actually loved this wise-crackin' fluffball so much, it created a game based on Alf's sitcom adventures. Who was crazy enough to invest in this reject dog?

A. Sega
B. Ocean
C. Taito
D. Codemasters

Question 4: In the Atari 2600 rendition of Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, how many hits to the hull (not the flashing hit zones) does it take to drop an AT-AT?

A. 12
B. 50
C. 48
D. 37

Question 5: Which one of these games did Pitfall creator David Crane not design?

A. Amazing Tennis
B. A Boy and His Blob
C. Solar Jetman
D. Super Skateboarding

Question 6: Before the video game crash in 1983, how many Colecovisions were sold?

A. 6,000,000
B. 500,000
C. 450,000
D. 4,000,000

Question 7: In the early 1980s, Tron ripped up the gaming scene. Within a matter of years, Mattel had released three different Tron games for the Intellivision. Out of the titles listed, which one never existed?

A. Tron: Maze-A-Tron
B. Tron: Electroscope
C. Tron: Deadly Discs
D. Tron: Solar Sailer

Question 8: With the arrival of the Super Nintendo came a surge in power. As developers tried to cram data into 8- and 16-Meg cartridges, one game squeaked by with a measly 2 Megs. What game was it?

A: AAAHH!!! Real Monsters
B. Spanky's Quest
C. Cliffhanger
D. Mr. Do!

Question 9: Which heavy metal band was not featured prominently in a video game?

A. Aerosmith
B. Poison
C. Motley Crüe
D. GWAR

Question 10: The arcade game Clone never went beyond prototype status for what reason?

A. It took your picture when you got the high score, and people kept pulling down their pants for the camera
B. It was stolen from the arcade it was being tested at, and reproducing another prototype unit was deemed too expensive
C. The chip technology for the cabinet was so advanced, it would cost over $10,000 to produce
D. It sucked

Score & Rank

1 Chester Arthur

2-3 Ronald Reagan

4-6 George Washington

7-9 Richard M. Nixon

10 Bill Clinton

Video Game Trivia Answers: 1. B 2. D 3. A 4. C 5. C 6. A 7. B 8. D 9. B 10. A

THE DARK SAVIOR

Sometimes good guys don't wear white, and sometimes they have long-ass knives coming out of their forearms. **Khameleon Entertainment** and **Terminal Reality** are collaborating to bring video game tale, ***The Forgotten***, out of the shadows. In a world where rogue super heroes have hijacked Humankind for their own misguided aims, this lone super villain is the only remaining hope.

GI spoke with Khameleon's President, **Frederick Jones**, about this unlikely hero. "*The Forgotten* is a very complex character that functions on his own morality, his own logic and why he does the things he does. That will be tied into the gameplay." Instead of just running around collecting junk, players can expect controls that are just as nonlinear as *The Forgotten* himself. "We're trying to do things that are more contextual in terms of what the character does and how he reacts to things that produces a more cinematic effect versus just punch-button punches and kick-button kicks."

Jones is currently shopping a demo around to publishers, and says that the title will utilize a new Terminal Reality-designed multi-platform console engine known as Ballistic. The game is also attracting Hollywood interest. Need a forgotten super villain for the part? Maybe Khameleon should give **Unbreakable's** Samuel L. Jackson a call.

BREAK DOWN

43% of GI editors have a girlfriend named either Meagan, Meaghan, or Megan

3% of our readers have asked, in writing, for a skin sample from each of us

55% of Reiner's Cokes in the fridge were actually drunk by him

22% of GI readers think Kato is the original Mr. Yuck

15% of the staff in the recent GI bowling trip thought that it helped their score to imagine beer bottles instead of bowling pins

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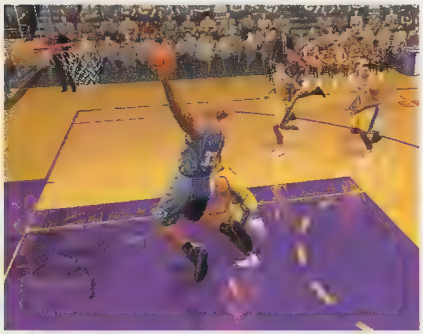
SEGA SPORTS SUMMIT DELIVERS

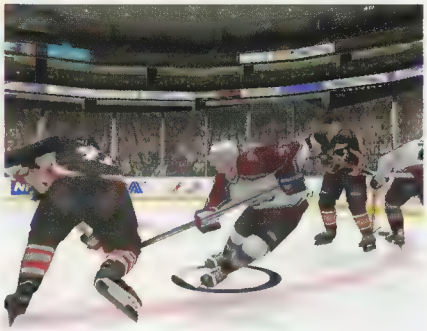
During its first-ever sports summit, President of **Sega of America**, **Peter Moore**, flat-out told the assembled press where the company was putting its eggs. "Sports will be [Sega's] killer app." Mr. Moore followed up with an interesting fact: "21% of the market is driven from sports games." Although that may seem like a small slice of the pie, Sega has made its respected ***2K*** sports titles 46% of all its software, thereby ensuring that fans keep their eye on the Sega-branded ball. Apart from the games that were unleashed below (turn to page 125 for our review of **Dreamcast's *NFL 2K2***), a key part to the company's strategy is pushing in-house developer **Visual Concepts** to deliver all sports to all platforms. Steering clear of the nasty word "port," **VC's** President **Greg Thomas** told us that his teams were working to differentiate each title's version on the various platforms. For instance, the **GameCube** editions of some sports titles were being designed to "fit the audiences better" through features such as more unlockable elements. The **Xbox's** hard drive, meanwhile, will be tapped for its potential.

Moving onward, other areas are being looked at by Sega to provide a more compelling experience. Voice chat, which is already being used in Dreamcast's ***Alien Front Online***, will be used sometime in the future, and online broadcasts of ***NFL 2K2*** or ***2K3*** playoff games are being considered. What about widening Visual Concepts' scope to include extreme sports? Peter Moore would only say it's "something [Sega is] now looking at very seriously." Whatever the decision, Sega has no plans on dropping the ball on sports gamers looking for a good bit of game.



NBA 2K2

The best basketball game in town gets better, amazingly enough. New features abound, whether it's being able to do a new drop-step in the post or implement the now-allowed zone defenses. The number of animations has been upped and the players themselves have an improved look to go along with the legendary street court in Mosswood Park, O-Town.



NHL 2K2

Although in early form when we played it, ***NHL 2K2*** is shaping up nicely, including an overhaul of its goalie AI. Each one will play to their real-life strenghts and weaknesses. Now you don't have to pull off the mask to see the difference between Dominik Hasek and Patrick Roy. Multiple season play also has us flashing our toothless grins.

TENNIS 2K2

After a spectacular first outing, Tennis returns to not only deliver top-ranked women players, but an exclusive chance to compete as the Williams sisters, no less! Rise through the tennis ranks with singles, doubles, and even mixed-doubles matches in the World Circuit mode. The replays are more detailed and the action is just as spot-on.

SEGA SPORTS 2K2/3 SCHEDULE

(Dates subject to change)

DREAMCAST
- ***NBA 2K2*** (October)
- ***NHL 2K2*** (early 2002)
- ***Tennis 2K2*** (October)

PLAYSTATION 2
- ***NFL 2K2*** (October)
- ***NBA 2K2*** (November)
- ***Tennis 2K2*** (March 2002)

XBOX
- ***NFL 2K2*** (December)
- ***NBA 2K2*** (January 2002)

GAMECUBE
- ***NBA 2K2*** (Spring 2002)

All platforms, except Dreamcast, are expected to receive all six 2K3 sports franchises: ***NFL***, ***NBA***, ***NHL***, ***Tennis***, ***World Series Baseball***, and ***NCAA Football***. However, ***Tennis 2K3*** won't appear on GameCube. In addition, **Visual Concepts** is working on an ***NCAA Basketball*** for undisclosed consoles.

DATA FILE

➤ Although the final version for the Game Boy Advance has been announced by Midway, this should appear in the first quarter of 2002, while Acclaim's Mortal Kombat's will grace various platforms in the fall of next year.

➤ The Sacramento Sonics and Don Mattingly are the latest Marvel comics to be licensed out by Activision for a slate of video games. Also approaching the movies in the two comics due to come out at the end of 2002. This not known yet if the titles will release before the films.

➤ Cunning Coyote has no delays on its hands. Xbox's Bounty Hunter and the Xbox to the PlayStation 2 are fully developed in for spring of 2002. No reason has been given for the setbacks, but normal developmental circumstances are believed to be the cause.

➤ Rogue Spear is now on line has been signed up to help American soldiers. Although it will not be used for weapons training, the Department of Defense has partnered the Ubi Soft product to aid in small unit decision making before, during, and after combat.

➤ Due out this [illegible] 25 years, because Square Soft has confirmed that Final Fantasy X for the PlayStation 2 will arrive in stores in January. This is a pleasant surprise as it was originally thought it would be out in early February or March.

➤ Being [illegible] Monster Ranchers, that is. Tecmo is adding a Game Boy Advance installment for us, just after New Year's Day 2002. Monster Rancher Advance will allow for the unique creation of monsters through the input of words and numbers. Tournament access via link cables is also on the menu.

➤ Electronic Arts' Medal of Honor: Allied Assault PC title has been delayed until the first week of February [illegible] the incredible standard that was set by Allied Assault's presentation at E3. An EA spokesperson said [illegible] to say: "We wouldn't want to sacrifice quality [illegible] on a deadline."

➤ Has GameSpy's cross-platform play for Phantasy Star Online ver. 2? Sega director Yuji Naka is considering adding the feature due to the fan mail codes have made the entire roster of Dreamcast items available. He initially wanted PC and GameCube users to interact so they could trade items that were exclusive to each console. Naka said he wouldn't want to expose GC players to a game with "tons of cheaters using [illegible]."

Now The Game Begins
[illegible] 104

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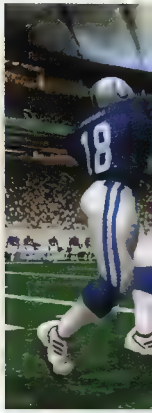
So Manning's like, "Get in the freakin' end zone!" So very calmly, I said, "Peyton, if you want me to listen, you'll speak to me like a human being." Am I wrong here?



This is your day. You get up, you go to work, someone makes fun of your momma, you tear an ACL, you hear trade rumors, you go home. This isn't playing the NFL — this is playing in the NFL. The graphics, the camera angles, the intensity, the trophy case. Have a good night, Mr. Manning. See you tomorrow.

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GI Breaks Down The Match-Up

This November promises to be a month quite unlike any other in the history of the video game industry. For the first time, two high profile console launches will happen within days of one another. Microsoft fires the first salvo on November 15 with the release of the Xbox, the company's first foray into the home console market. On November 18, a scant three days later, the legendary Nintendo will release the GameCube, the eighth video game system in its 112-year history.

Both Nintendo and Microsoft have a lot riding on the success of their respective machines. For Microsoft, this is its chance to prove that it can succeed in the hardware business, a sector of the technology trade that has thus far proven tough to crack for the Seattle software giant. For Nintendo, November offers the opportunity to reclaim its title as the leader of the home console market after a futile five-year battle with Sony's wildly successful PlayStation system.

With the US economy teetering on the brink of full-blown recession, consumer confidence badly shaken by the recent terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC, and the stock markets in an extended tailspin, retailers are increasingly nervous about the upcoming fiscal quarter. While these might not be the best of times to be bringing a new console to store shelves, both companies remain confident that their million-dollar bankroll will win the hearts of shoppers this holiday season. Talking with Seamus Blackley, Microsoft's Xbox Technical Officer, he stressed that the company is taking a long-term view in its Xbox plans. "You don't cancel things just because the economy dips, especially in a business with a five-year cycle," Blackley comments. "It can cause you to be a lot more careful, but you carry on. The commitment is definitely there, because everyone understands that it's a five-year plan. [Xbox] is just not going away; there's just too much momentum. The economy goes up and down, but ultimately if you run a responsible business you're going to do okay. That's what we have."

Looking at the two systems, what is striking is how different they are from each other in terms of both aesthetics and philosophy. The most obvious contrast is the size of both units. The monolithic Xbox, which is roughly the size of a VCR and weighs in at nearly nine pounds, is distinctly American in its "bigger is better" design and the cutting edge PC components that make up its architecture. Nintendo has taken the opposite tack with the GameCube, easily the most compact home console ever made. Only four and a half inches high and six inches wide, its small proportions almost beggar belief. Always keeping a firm eye on the bottom line, Nintendo has reportedly kept the cost of producing the unit well below that of Xbox, relying on its engineering

DOWN

Between Xbox and GameCube

skill to make up for a lack of high-end (and high-priced) electronics.

The differences extend well beyond the physical dimensions of each machine. Microsoft has aggressively courted third-party developers and publishers, seeking to follow the blueprint Sony created during the five-year reign of the PlayStation. Most of the big name companies in the business have already signed on, including Sega, Capcom, Tecmo, and Electronic Arts. Microsoft is working hard to make the Xbox the system of choice for developers. Seamus Blackley said, "Xbox is the representation of a very core value we have – the best thing you can do to make a platform successful is to empower all the partners. Then the whole thing is strong because of the partners, especially with game developers. You have to give them everything they need so they can be maximally creative. You can't exercise a lot of control. Nintendo has a much more closed model. That's the philosophical difference. Xbox is supposed to be a wild creative place where there is enough structure to ensure that the products have a high quality, but not so much structure that you don't see crazy innovation."

With Xbox's hard drive and raw processing power, the console is obviously capable of delivering amazing graphics, as already evidenced in games like Dead or Alive 3 and Halo. Microsoft also promises that its ambitious Internet plans will take gamers online in record numbers.

Conversely, Nintendo has not emphasized the GameCube technical specifications, but rather the ease with which developers can make games for the system. At the recently held Space World convention, Nintendo Executive Vice President Atsushi Asada commented that games have reached the point where gamers have come to take amazing graphics for granted. What is needed, he felt, was for companies to produce innovative and entertaining games. As always, Nintendo's focus remains squarely on doing just that, and the GameCube has been designed to help achieve this goal. Although its recent signing of an exclusive deal with Capcom to bring the Resident Evil series to GameCube is impressive, it appears that Nintendo will rely largely on its unparalleled internal development teams to create the system's marquee titles.

Two diverse choices await gamers this fall: Follow Microsoft into the brave new world of Xbox, or stick with Nintendo as it continues the tradition of making groundbreaking games that are firmly rooted in its proven past. Of course, the best decision you could make would be to whip out the Visa and buy both, but that might not be possible for most. Read on as we break down both systems, with side-by-side comparisons, as well as the Game Informer staff's opinions on GameCube and Xbox.

XBOX

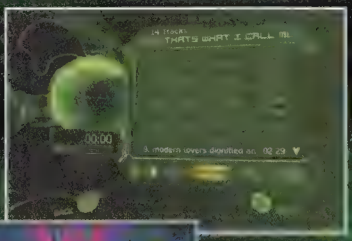
THE HARDWARE

Upon opening your Xbox, you'll be immediately struck by how solid it feels. A great deal of this extra weight is due to the 8-gigabyte hard drive, which is also the unit's one clear advantage over its competitors. While developers are already salivating at the gameplay possibilities opened up by the hard drive, consumers will be pleased to hear that it also facilitates some very cool front-end options, especially in the console's audio capabilities. Xbox owners will be able to make custom music mixes, saved to the hard drive from their own CDs. It's a pretty simple process. Just pop in the CD, go to the Audio menu, and hit the copy icon. Once on the drive, songs can be re-ordered, labeled, and divided into different mixes. Many Xbox titles, like Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X, will allow you to listen to your tunes during gameplay. This is a very cool feature that is extremely easy to use. The only true flaw we observed in Microsoft's design of the console is the fact that DVD movie playback can only be utilized with a DVD remote add-on that must be purchased separately for $29.95.

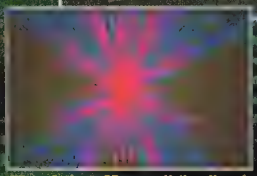
Another option that might not be quite so popular with younger gamers is the Xbox's Parental Control. This function allows concerned guardians to enter a code that prevents the unit from playing DVD movies and games of a specified rating. Again, this feature is very easy to use; so easy that even your parents will be able to figure it out.

So far, the press has been sharply divided on the Xbox's controller, and it is conceivable that the peripheral's bulky size may prove to be uncomfortable for children or gamers with smaller hands. The offset button placement will also take some getting used to for people raised on SNES and PlayStation. So far, it hasn't diminished our enjoyment of the gameplay experience, but it must be said that it is probably less comfortable than the GameCube controller, and not as versatile as Sony's Dual Shock. Overall, it seems best suited to driving games and first-person shooters, and less effective in combo-intensive titles like Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X. Still, it's a sturdy piece of equipment, and it does have a great innovation in the form of a snap-off connection that safeguards the console from falling when someone trips over the controller cord.

While all the Xbox's bells and whistles are a nice touch, the machine's state of the art circuitry delivers graphics that are the rival of anything seen thus far on the PS2 or GameCube. Even in their early stages, the first-generation Xbox titles are looking fantastic – particularly Halo and Project Gotham Racing – and are arguably graphically superior to early PlayStation 2 titles. If the improvement we saw between the first and second generations of PlayStation 2 is any indication, then we should expect to see some mind-blowing Xbox software come next holiday season. The only problem with this theory could be in the fact that the Xbox is reportedly a much more approachable platform for developers than the notoriously finicky PS2. This could mean that programmers are getting a high level of performance from the hardware straight out of the gate, causing us to wonder if the improvement in software will not be as exponential as it has been on PlayStation 2.



The hard drive allows you to create and edit your own custom music mixes



When playing a CD, press Y, then X, and you'll bring up an interactive light show that bounces to your tunes

Parents can use the Xbox's locked technology to prevent the unit from playing M-rated games or R-rated DVDs

The Xbox controller is large, but surprisingly comfortable

This snap-off connection prevents clumsy gamers from toppling their Xbox

XBOX TECH SPECS

- CPU: Intel 733 MHz chip
- Graphics Processor: 250 MHz nVIDIA XGPU chip
- Total Memory: 64MB
- Polygon Performance: 125 million/sec
- Compressed Textures: 6:1
- Storage Medium: 4.7GB DVD, 8GB Hard Disk, 8MB Memory Unit
- I/O: 4 Controller Ports, Ethernet (Supports broadband)
- Audio Channels: 256
- Maximum Resolution: 1920x1080
- DVD Movie Playback: Requires Remote Add-On (Sold separately)

GAMECUBE

THE HARDWARE

In design and functionality, the GameCube is uniquely Nintendo in every way. Unlike the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, which seek to emulate the look of home entertainment components, Nintendo has focused on creating a compact and visually striking console that could never be mistaken for anything but a video game system. Part of this strategy is no doubt rooted in concern for the Japanese market, where cramped living quarters place a premium on space. The unit can be easily tucked away in a convenient nook, and you could nearly fit four GameCubes into one Xbox.

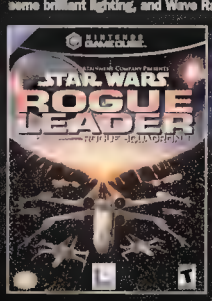
The GameCube storage discs are diminutive as well, measuring only 3 1/8 inches in diameter. Though small, they are extremely high density and hold 1.5GB of data. This is an improvement over the 1GB discs Sega created for the Dreamcast, but still falls far short of the 4.7GB DVD standard used by Sony and Microsoft. In time, this lack of storage capacity could become an issue, perhaps requiring publishers to revert to releasing games as multiple disc packs, a practice that became quite common in the PlayStation era. Nintendo's motivation for using this unconventional disc is simple – piracy prevention. Again, this is a quintessential Nintendo move, similar to how the company kept a notoriously close reign on its cartridge manufacturing in years past. After watching Sony lose millions of dollars over the last half-decade to PlayStation bootleggers, Nintendo feels that the loss prevented by using the 1.5GB discs outweighs the inherent technological disadvantages of the format. For gamers looking to jump on the DVD bandwagon, Panasonic will be manufacturing a DVD/GameCube hybrid unit to be released sometime next year.

The GameCube's spindle has a button that releases the disc, which should help reduce wear and tear on the unit's laser mechanism

The unit has a number of subtle features that make improvements over the top-loading disc systems of the past. For example, if the lid is opened during gameplay, the unit will pause and prompt the player to close it again. Also, the spindle can be pressed down to eject the disc, which prevents users from pulling the drive mechanism out of alignment when removing games from the unit – one of the main causes of breakdowns for PlayStation and Dreamcast. In the back of the unit, there are two A/V ports, one that uses the same analog out that was employed for both the SNES and N64, and another for a special digital video cable that is compatible with progressive scan HDTVs.

Although most thought it looked rather odd in the initial press pictures Nintendo released, the GameCube controller is, quite simply, a marvelous feat of engineering. A slight alteration of Sony's Dual Shock, its contours fit nicely in your hand. The buttons are large and spaced in an unconventional manner, but after a few minutes of manipulating the controller becomes almost second nature. The buttons, d-pad, and both analog sticks all have a solid feel, and seem to be very durable. One could complain that Nintendo chose to include only three shoulder buttons, but this is a minor criticism at best.

Nintendo promises that GameCube will be able to produce graphics that rival both the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, but the three Japanese launch games we've played only scratch the surface of the machine's power. Still, Luigi's Mansion does feature some brilliant lighting, and Wave Race's water effects are a sight to behold. The screenshots we've seen of such upcoming titles like Star Wars: Rogue Leader and Star Fox Adventures: Dinosaur Planet, suggest that future GameCube software will be extremely impressive.



More impressive is the fact that all these visual fireworks are brought to life using relatively inexpensive chip components. This has allowed Nintendo to bring the console in at a suggested retail price of $199, a full hundred dollars below the price of Xbox and PlayStation 2. In these uncertain economic times, this could prove to be the GameCube's best feature of all.

This digital A/V cable allows the GameCube to be used with high-definition televisions

GAMECUBE TECH SPECS

- CPU: 485 MHz IBM Power PC Gekko chip
- Graphics Processor: 162 MHz ATI Flipper GPU
- Total Memory: 43MB
- Polygon Performance: 6-12 million/sec
- Compressed Textures: 6:1
- Storage Medium: Proprietary 1.5GB disc, .5MB Memory Card
- I/O: 4 Controller Ports, 2 Serial Ports, Parallel Port (56K Modem Sold separately)
- Audio Channels: 64
- Maximum Resolution: N/A
- DVD Movie Playback: No

GameCube discs are much smaller than conventional DVDs

XBOX

THE ACCESSORIES

If you've got some extra cash burning a hole in your pocket after you shell out $400 for an Xbox plus some games, there will be plenty of reasons to blow your hard-earned money on a host of peripherals and accessories for Microsoft's upstart console. Unfortunately, we don't have a picture of the most important Xbox add-on, the DVD Playback Kit, because Microsoft hasn't approved a final design for the remote control. We do know that it is planned to retail for $29.95.

MAD CATZ PREMIUM XBOX CONTROLLER

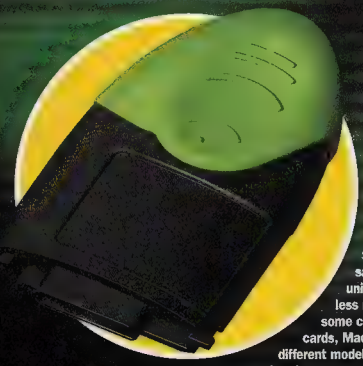
Mad Catz has a track record of making very useful, high quality controllers, and this is no exception. Noting the complaints many have had with the button placement on the standard Xbox controller, Mad Catz has crafted theirs with buttons in the widely-spaced, diamond formation that has proved so successful on the PlayStation. Also, the grips are rubberized and slightly less bulky than the standard model. Retail Price: $34.99

XBOX PANTHER STICK

Fans of air combat and first-person shooters might want to check out this Mad Catz PC-style control stick. It features a multi-function joystick and a trackball. Retail Price: N/A

XBOX HDTV HOOK-UP CABLE

This little unit allows you to hook your Xbox up to high definition televisions – the boob tube of the future. Once you've seen HDTV, there's no going back, so this should be a no-brainer for all well-to-do gamers. Retail Price: $19.99



MAD CATZ XBOX MEMORY CARD

Since Xbox will allow players to save their games directly to the unit's hard drive, memory cards are less necessary than in the past. To add some commercial appeal to its memory cards, Mad Catz will be selling three different models, each with a preloaded, completed game save for Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X, Mad Dash, or 4x4 Evolution. If you suck at games, or are just plain lazy, this may be just the product you've been looking for. Retail Price: $24.99

VOICE COMMUNICATOR

Although Microsoft hasn't revealed when its online network will be up and running, it has promised that its Voice Communicator peripheral will play a large part in its plans to connect gamers across the world with each other via the console's broadband modem. Reportedly, players will be able to talk to each other during gameplay in real-time. If this works as planned, this could be the next big thing in online gaming. Retail Price: N/A

GAMECUBE

THE ACCESSORIES

It seems like the third-party peripheral developers are being a little more cautious in developing products for the GameCube. However, Nintendo is bringing out a number of very interesting accessories and peripherals to market, including the first-ever modem add-on in company history and a potentially revolutionary GBA link cable. Read and learn about some of the products that could change the way you game forever.

56K MODEM

This compact modem attachment slips into a port in the bottom of the GameCube, although it's still unclear as to whether you'll actually be able to do anything with it. Nintendo has publicly stated that the company will not begin an online gaming network until it is convinced that it can be a profitable enterprise. However, Peter Moore of Sega was recently quoted by several sources as having said that Nintendo would help support companies, like Sega, that want to create online networks and games for the GameCube with some degree of technical support. As of press time, Sega's Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2 is still planned as an online title for the GameCube. Retail Price: N/A

WAVEBIRD CONTROLLER

Wireless controllers have never really taken off, but Nintendo promises that this radio remote unit will function flawlessly from up to 10 meters (33 feet). This added maneuverability comes at a price, however, as the unit is slightly larger and weighs a bit more than the standard GC controller. Still, this looks like a sweet purchase for those who are sick of tangled cords. Retail Price: N/A

PANASONIC GAMECUBE/DVD HYBRID

Even though the standard GameCube hardware isn't compatible with DVD, Nintendo has teamed with Panasonic to bring a GC/DVD hybrid console to consumers that want DVD capabilities. This unit will retail for $325 in Japan, although no US release date or pricing information has been released. Panasonic is manufacturing a special gray GameCube controller, as well as a conventional DVD remote for the unit. So far, it appears that the DVD drive will be used strictly for movie playback, and not gaming applications. Retail Price: N/A

GAME BOY ADVANCE LINK CABLE

This is one of the most exciting peripherals for the GameCube, as it will allow players to use their Game Boy Advance units as a GC controller. Some games, like the planned sequel to Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble, will even feature action that takes place on both the GC and GBA screens. This final version of the GBA Link is a little different from the first mock-up we saw, and now clamps into the two notches on the back of the GBA unit. Retail Price: N/A

MEMORY CARDS

When it comes to memory cards, Nintendo has gone to both extremes in terms of size and capacity. Oddly, the larger, standard Memory Card 59 only holds a paltry .5MB of data, but there will also be an adaptor that allows you to use Panasonic's small high-density SD digicard, which holds a whopping 64MB of game saves (PS2 and Xbox memory cards hold 8MB). Retail Price: Memory Card 59 – $14.95, Panasonic SD Memory Card – $99.99, SD Memory Card Adaptor – N/A

XBOX

THE VERDICT

Microsoft's maiden voyage into console waters is a daring venture, but does the system have what it takes to compete with veteran system manufacturers like Nintendo and Sony? Let's see what the Game Informer review crew thinks about the new kid on the video game block.

REINER

I have a feeling that Microsoft is here for the long run, and in time, the Xbox will be a contender, posing a serious threat to both Sony and Nintendo. Just like the PlayStation, Xbox will undergo a series of growing pains as it tries to establish itself. Microsoft needs to generate brand name first-party titles, and as it has done so already, secure high caliber software as Xbox exclusives. Basically, they need to give gamers, both casual and hardcore, a reason to jump onto the bandwagon. It's the most powerful system, the hard drive rocks, and the multiplayer options will be second to none. It just needs time to grow.

MATT

Finding a market niche between Sony's already established PlayStation 2 and Nintendo's GameCube won't be an easy task, but I can't help being impressed with the level of quality that Microsoft has achieved with the Xbox. This is no doubt the most powerful home console ever made. The only question is whether that will matter. Remember – the Sega Master System was more powerful than the NES, and that didn't seem to do it a bit of good. Still, the unit's graphical capacity and built-in hard drive will offer developers endless opportunities to innovate. If Microsoft's Internet plans are as groundbreaking as promised, don't be surprised if this dark horse takes the race.

JUSTIN

At first I considered Xbox to have a pretty weak first generation lineup. Once I had a good chunk of the games in front of me, though, I realized the system's true potential. Xbox can do some amazing things with its hard drive and graphical capabilities. Plus, most of the big genres (fighting, racing, FPS) are represented with quality software, even if there will be a sea of crap titles and sloppy seconds to wade through as well. I'm not going to be first in line to buy one, especially when my money will be going to PS2 games, but I'll definitely be spending some overtime at work curling up with Halo, DOA 3, and others.

KATO

Three's a console crowd, and here's why: People ask me which of the next-gen systems they should get, and I have to answer assuming they can't buy all three. This somewhat leaves Xbox out in the cold – even though it's worth buying. Don't like the controller? Buy a third-party one. Don't want PC ports? How does Dino Crisis 3, DOA 3, or Jet Grind Radio Future sound for a start? Microsoft is getting usurped here and there on exclusive titles, but Halo looks like a good first-party opening salvo. Lastly, who says that Sony didn't buy its way to the top? I don't think you should only own an Xbox, but getting one is far from a dumb idea.

ANDY

Personally, I still think the controller is a big mistake, and that Microsoft will regret it later, but after playing all the launch titles I feel that Xbox's chances have improved. Halo and Dead or Alive 3 are fantastic games, but I still have my doubts that they are enough to help Xbox take the top spot. For Xbox to be successful it needs to get some exclusive and inspiring product, and I really don't see much of that in its future at the moment. This is definitely the most powerful of the systems and I love the hard drive (reduced load times and customizable music rule!), but it's gonna need a lot more than that to seriously challenge PS2.

JAY

I've been saying it for a while now, and the more I play Xbox, the harder my position gets cemented. Two years from now, Xbox and PlayStation 2 will be in a dead heat similar to the way Super Nintendo and Genesis were a decade ago. PS2 has the software library head start, but the simple fact is that the same game on both systems will look better on Xbox. The built-in hard drive is a huge boon for developers, as will be knowing that all owners are equipped to go online. A lot of people are bagging on the Xbox simply because it's a Microsoft product, but I think many a tune will be changing in the coming months.

KRISTIAN

Xbox both confuses and fascinates me. On the one hand you've got a multi-billion dollar company funneling untold amounts of money into making what they hope is the next best thing in video games. On the other hand, the same company can't seem to wrap its mind around making a decent controller. While it seems like a small thing, I hope this type of shortsightedness isn't indicative of things to come from Microsoft. Although the Xbox is presently putting its money where its mouth is when it comes to cool games that look great, I don't see it having the staying power that its competitors will undoubtedly enjoy.

> **"I can't help being impressed with the level of quality that Microsoft has achieved with the Xbox. This is no doubt the most powerful home console ever made. The only question is whether that will matter. Remember – the Sega Master System was more powerful than the NES, and that didn't seem to do it a bit of good."**

GAMECUBE

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

THE VERDICT

Fanboys will no doubt proclaim GameCube the best thing since oxygen, but will Nintendo old-school ethos be enough to take a console to the top of the heap in the new millennium? Let's find out what the Game Informer staff has to say about the Big N's console comeback bid.

REINER

The age-old quote, "It all comes down to the games," best describes Nintendo's next-gen position. As a first-party developer, Nintendo's efforts have always been outstanding, and I don't see them faltering with the GameCube. The Nintendo 64's third-party support was held back by the cartridge medium and a troublesome developmental process. From what I hear from developers, the GameCube is the easiest system to work with. So naturally, this will result in fewer delays and more games on retail shelves. The only thing holding this system back is the limited disc capacity. As we've seen in the past, technology continually improves, and developers will need all the memory they can tap into.

MATT

It's as cute as the dickens and surprisingly tiny, but the GameCube does appear to have some serious technology under the hood. It's been well designed to be a straight-up game machine, right down to the very comfortable controller. My only misgivings about the unit are in regard to Nintendo's archaic business practices, which could ultimately hamper third-party support for the system. Signing Resident Evil was a step in the right direction, but Nintendo needs to prove to me that it can put together solid slates of new releases year in and year out. Also, I'm starting to wonder if Miyamoto is chasing his muse into Never-Never Land. Pikmin doesn't exactly look like a blockbuster and the new Zelda seems to be a bizarre wrong turn for the series.

JUSTIN

The big question for GameCube is whether or not Nintendo learned from the wide array of mistakes it made with the N64. Unfortunately, I'm not too convinced it has. I love Mario and friends, and am excited about their new next-gen adventures, but that's no longer enough to get me into a console, especially since my N64 has been untouched for a year. As NES gamers grow older, Nintendo still continues to cater to the same pre-teen age group. GameCube's power is impressive, but it looks like a Fisher Price toy. Until Nintendo proves me wrong (and I hope it will), Game Boy Advance will remain the Nintendo system to own.

KATO

I'm going to buy a GameCube; probably own only a handful of its total games by the end of 2002, but I'll be happy as hell. No, I'm not a fanboy, but for a hundred bucks less than the competition, the thing will pay for itself in no time. Nintendo's usual corporate BS won't phase me as I'm not hanging on Miyamoto's every word anyway. Besides, if the dude's got the brains to sign-up Resident Evil, then there's no reason to worry. GameCube doesn't beat out the sheer software strength of PlayStation 2, but I simply can't ignore it, and I bet you can't either.

ANDY

As always, Nintendo's product is solid and at $199 it's not a bad buy, but I have that overwhelming feeling that it's gonna be the Nintendo 64 all over again. The smaller media will eventually limit the software somewhere along the line, and until Nintendo proves to me that it can keep a solid stable of third-party product always coming out, I feel this system is destined to be played only four times a year when the big Nintendo first-party staples come out like Mario and Zelda. The launch lineup of Luigi's and Wave Race is solid, but not spectacular. I think I'll take a watch and wait approach on this one until there is a title I absolutely must have.

JAY

Nintendo will make mad money with its new system – the company does with all of its hardware – but GameCube is destined for third place. Because its disc capacity is one-third that of a DVD, third-party publishers will soon find it difficult and undesirable to bring their best titles to GameCube. This sets up the limited software problem Nintendo faithful faced with N64. Will the system have its share of unbelievable games? Of course. However, we'll soon be lucky to see one triple-A title a month for GameCube, while Xbox and PS2 will be delivering ten times that amount.

KRISTIAN

First things first: Nintendo has not yet given me a reason to forego buying a GameCube. Its upcoming titles are varied and exciting, its licenses are highly popular, it'll be selling for substantially less than its competitors, and gaming opportunities that open up from the cooperative play design between it and the Game Boy Advance are enough to make a fanboy issue forth some pants pudding. Paradoxically, its processing power and storage capacity is low enough to give one pause. Hopefully these things won't hamper the system from accumulating a large and impressive library – something the N64 did not do.

> **"Nintendo's efforts have always been outstanding, and I don't see them faltering with the GameCube. The Nintendo 64's third-party support was held back by the cartridge medium and a troublesome developmental process. From what I hear from developers, the GameCube is the easiest system to work with."**

DAG YO! IT'S THE AMPED GUIDE TO FREESTYLE!

A BASIC GUIDE TO THE MOUNTAIN

THE RODEO FLIP: Also known as the "Don't Try This At Home." The nice part of this trick is that once you're insane enough to try it, you're probably ready for a magazine cover.

The nice thing about freestyle is that you can huck in the park (fig. A) or boost in the pipe (fig. B) and crack your pelvis either way.

THE MEDIA INTERVIEW:
Dos and Don'ts

DON'T:
Forget the shout-out
Act like you care

DO:
Act sullen
Speak incoherently

POCKET PHRASE TRANSLATOR

ENGLISH:
"THAT WAS A NICE TRICK."
FREESTYLE:
"DAG!"

ENGLISH:
"I LIKE YOUR PANTS."
FREESTYLE:
"DAG."

ENGLISH:
"I THINK I'VE FRACTURED MY PELVIS."
FREESTYLE:
"DAG."

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We have hungrily sampled every conceivable delicacy on Microsoft's new hardware marvel. Now, we want you to know which of the Xbox dishes taste the sweetest. Here are our picks for the ten best, guaranteed to leave you with a pleasant aftertaste and zero indigestion.

DEAD OR ALIVE 3

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 4 PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO ■ **DEVELOPER** TECMO ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

We've shared our anticipation for DOA3 in the past, and as the Xbox launch nears, our desire for a fight only grows, especially now that we've learned and seen so much more on the game. Destined to be the hottest number in the Xbox beauty pageant, we've seen a slew of new stages, as well as all the initial fighters. A naughty school teacher will throw you off of a building. A dude using Drunken Monkey kung fu will leave erratic tracks in the fluffy, morphing snow of an icy level. Seamless cutscenes once again tell each fighter's story, leading up to one of the wildest boss battles ever witnessed. The mode list is stacked deep, with Survival, Time Attack, Watch, Vs., Practice, and the beloved Team Battle. Your two-person squad is capable of executing devastating double-team attacks, including painful team throws. The gameplay is exquisite, and almost every move can be countered. Next to Halo, no Xbox game has made our jaws drop to the floor like DOA3, and not just because of the sexy new outfits. You will be working on your video game kung fu for years to come with this extremely deep title.

PROJECT EGO

■ **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** TBA
■ **DEVELOPER** BIG BLUE BOX STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** TBA

Xbox's most ambitious project is also the farthest from completion. It will be years before gamers get their hands on Project Ego, but considering the scope of the title, it will be something well worth the wait. Headed up by heralded visionary Peter Molyneux, Project Ego will set new standards for what an RPG can look and play like. Rather than merely following the adventures of a snot-nosed teen, players create a 15-year-old protagonist and control him or her until they die of dismemberment or old age. How your character develops is entirely up to you. If you want to cast spells, you'll have to attend classes aplenty. If the warrior's path more suits your style, better be sure to do some heavy lifting early on to build up your muscle tone. As the game progresses, not only will your character change and age, so will the world at large. For example, were you to have an illicit one-night stand in your youth, 20 years down the line, you might find yourself faced with a son looking to have an angry word or two with his abandoning parent. This is the kind of deep-seeded, character-development thoughts that will plague players of Project Ego throughout the game, and exactly what will make it so interesting.

HALO

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION (16-PLAYER VIA LAN) ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT
■ **DEVELOPER** BUNGIE ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

Halo is this issue's Game of the Month, and with good reason. Halo drops you right in the middle of an intergalactic war that is so well executed, it really feels like you are part of a Hollywood movie fighting right alongside your troops. It's an experience akin to being Rico in *Starship Troopers*. All the characters speak and interact with you, and any vehicle you find can be hopped in and controlled. Not only does this first-person shooter offer incredible depth in interactivity, it also has some of the most gorgeous graphics and particle effects a console has ever seen. No matter which way you cut it, Halo is one of the must-haves of the Xbox experience, and it certainly is one of the launch games that gives you a good glimpse of the power of the Xbox.

The tortured mind of the racer:
every corner, a thousand split-second decisions. Open it up or back it off. Win with style points or lap times. Brake early or back it in. The blonde or the brunette. And with 4 cities, 200+ circuits and 25+ cars to choose from, it's all your call, it just depends.

What's driving you?

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

EVERYONE
E
MILD LYRICS
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

XBOX

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

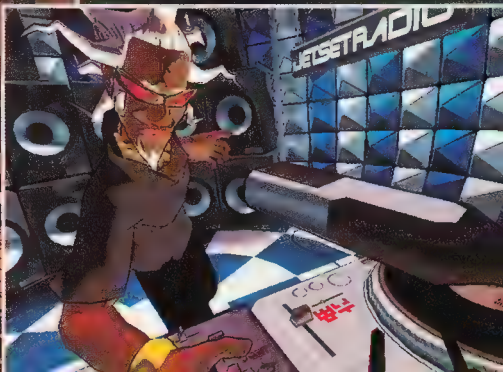
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 32-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL EXTREMES ■ **RELEASE** 1ST QUARTER 2002

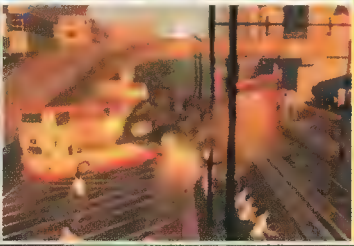
Right now, all Xbox first-person shooter eyes are on Halo, but early next year, Unreal Championship will unleash its own bag of tricks. Digital Extremes is working to release the title in conjunction with Xbox's broadband program, giving you the 32-player online firefights you so crave. Not content to coast on technology alone, good old gameplay will rule with Digital's implementation of controls that hug the Xbox controller and let you perform combos and set up kills using team members you've earned. UC is doing away with the traditional floating weapons, ammo, and health of FPSs. You'll now start battles with all the weapons you've unlocked up to that point. Meanwhile, the latter two items can only be picked up if you stop at specific stations. We'll see you there come next year — and we'll be excitedly waiting with gun in hand.

JET GRIND RADIO FUTURE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4 PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SMILEBIT ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 12, 2002

The title that prompted a cel shading expos on in gaming will be back with an in line vengeance early next year on Xbox. From early looks, Jet Grind Radio Future is an improvement in all aspects over the Dreamcast original. Speed lines and motion blurring have been added to enhance the feeling of zinging through the now fully 3D environments. Many new tricks and graffiti designs will be implemented, and rumor has it some designs can only be done in cooperation with others in multiplayer. Although exactly what music tracks will be playing as you skate about haven't been revealed, it is known that the entire soundtrack will come courtesy of the label made famous by the Beastie Boys, Grand Royal Records. Start shaking your spray cans, for soon it will again be time to deface things in the name of good fun.





WRECKLESS

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER DRIVING/ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
■ **DEVELOPER** BUNKASHA PUBLISHING ■ **RELEASE** 1ST QUARTER 2002

Imagine a monster truck bouncing through the streets of Hong Kong and you're only halfway to what Wreckless (formerly known as Double S.T.E.A.L.) is about. Work as one of two operatives investigating the Hong Kong Mafia in two different storylines, take control of one of ten vehicles (including an armored personnel carrier), and watch the pedestrians scatter like marbles. Mission-based driving may be your job, but using the interactive city to your own ends will be your one true love. Just make sure your vehicle's real-time damage modeling, or the city's realistic traffic models, don't get in your way. Activision titles have been chock full of unlockables, with replay value up the tailpipe, and Wreckless should fit the mold nicely.

MAX PAYNE

■ **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ROCKSTAR
■ **DEVELOPER** NEO ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13

One of the most exciting and popular games to hit the PC circuit this year will make the not-so-long journey over to the familiar surroundings of Xbox. Loaded with pulse-pounding action and a fascinating storyline, Max Payne plunges gamers into a world of crime, corruption, passion, and vengeance. With a *Matrix*-inspired battle control dubbed Bullet Time, players are able to slow time as they fly through the air leashing torrents of slugs at their opponents. Taking place in New York City, Max Payne is an undercover cop who has lost everything and is looking to dole out some payback.

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4 PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** BIZARRE CREATIONS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

From the same people who brought you Metropolis Street Racer for Dreamcast, Bizarre's Project Gotham Racing is sure to be THE Xbox racing title to own. Like MSR, players hit the real-world streets in modern day hot rods, and attempt to drive both efficiently and with style to earn Kudo points. These Kudos are used to buy new vehicles, tracks, and challenges, of which Project Gotham has plenty. In all there are 28 cars and around 300 tracks located in four cities – Tokyo, London, San Francisco, and New York City. Every site has been meticulously modeled, with the design team even getting permission from area businesses and local DJs to have their storefronts and radio voices included. Add all this to an unbelievable polygon count and a constant 60 frames per second, and you've got a game that will have people saying "Gran Turwhatsmo?" in no time.

DINO CRISIS 3

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4 PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM
■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** TBA

Details on the third Dino Crisis are near nil, thanks to Capcom being so tight-lipped about the project. The only facts known about the game are that Shinji Mikami is at the helm, that dinosaurs will be causing a ruckus, and multiple players will be able to work together to quell the reptilian threat. Dino Crisis is highly anticipated for two reasons, first, it's arriving on Xbox before any other system; and second, Capcom's recent Resident Evil exclusivity clause with GameCube begs the question of whether Regina and the gang will only be hanging with Microsoft. As Mikami himself is prone to say, "Time will tell."

ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** ODDWORLD INHABITANTS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

Who says all the weird games come out of Japan? Microsoft's first, and perhaps still biggest, coup was the luring of Oddworld Inhabitants away from PlayStation 2, making the second installment of the Oddworld Quintology the exclusive province of Xbox. Having moved into the 3D realm, Munch's Oddysee is now less of a platformer, and more an exercise in problem solving. By switching between Abe and Munch, players must decipher how to bypass or defeat overwhelming odds at the hands of the Glukkons. Death comes often, but a quick trip to an egg basket will instantly regenerate whatever character has met his end, effectively giving players an unlimited number of lives. Sound too easy? Believe us, if players hope to rescue the last can of Gabbiare – a delicacy made out of the fertile eggs of Munch's race – it will take all the brainpower, gaming skills, and dedication they can muster.

Best RPG of E3
- Computer Gaming World

Top 20 Games of E3
- GameSpot

#1 Xbox Game of E3
-Gamesmania

Elder Scrolls Series
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THE REST OF XBOX

Microsoft has strained its corporate brain to get the best of the video game publishing world to display their wares on Xbox. Now that the system is in the house, it's time for these companies to belly up to the bar. Let us indulge you with info on some other impressive-looking titles.

BLOOD WAKE

A mission-based, boat lovers tour de force, Blood Wake takes all the liquid speed of Hydro Thunder and adds a plentiful dose of destructive razzmatazz. Take three friends on in deathmatch to show them what floats your boat, and sinks theirs.

NASCAR THUNDER 2002

The power of the Xbox's fully under the hood of this NASCAR title. Persistent effects such as tire skids are all over an entire season of NASCAR action. The create-a-car feature puts you in a full field of cars and has you conquering challenges in order to earn sponsors.

MX 2002 FEATURING RICKY CHARMICHAEL

There's so much you can do with one of MX 2002's motocross bikes. It's a chair, a bed, and it can even run freestyle and race courses. It won't do Superman seat grabs, though – that's your job. We suggest you explore the fun-filled minigames when you're not working your way around the tracks.

NFL FEVER 2002

Who says you can't buy a Super Bowl Ring? Get Fever and you can start stocking it with championships, extensive franchise stat features, and retired jerseys via the game's trophy case. Oh yeah, earning these career achievements ain't a bad time, either.

AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

From well-worn runs to the uncharted areas and ice patches of Vermont's Stratton location, Amped gives you quite a bundle for your bindings. Not only are there multiple runs down several real world mountains, but there are places galore to rail slide, mute grab, and mad trick your way down.

GUN VALKYRIE

This title looked quite impressive at E3, and since then developer Smilebit has been working hard to make sure that this third-person action/shooter is one of the premier titles for Xbox. So far, it looks pretty similar to MDK 2: Armageddon, with a little more emphasis on gunplay.

FUSION FRENZY

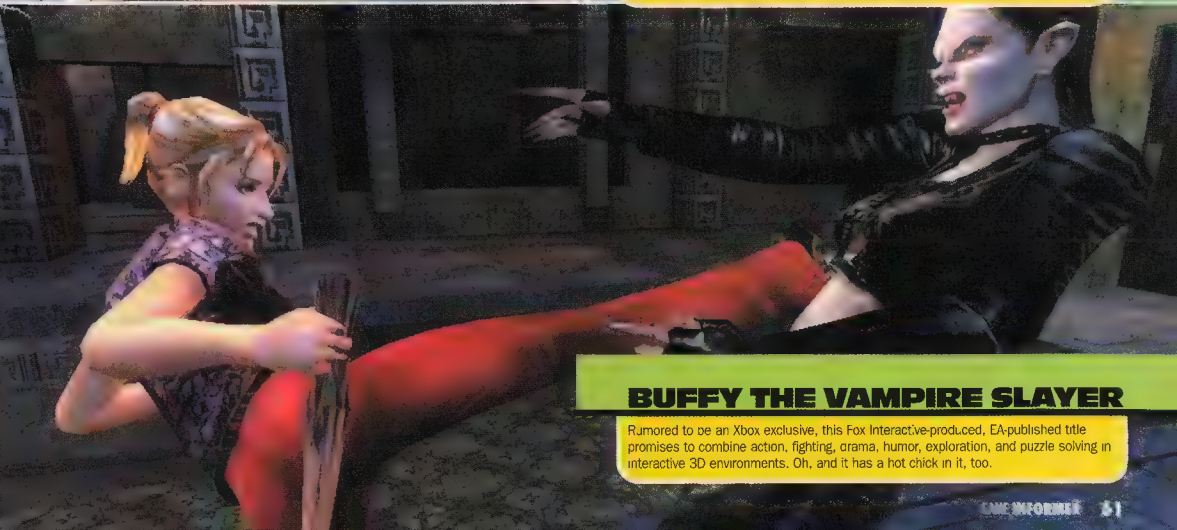
This is Xbox's get-together game, but don't you dare compare it to Mario Party. Forgoing all board game elements, Fusion Frenzy is all about blowing everyone away in a plethora of minigames that happen to be pretty entertaining.

LOONS: THE FIGHT FOR FAME

Andy Warhol said everyone will be famous for 15 minutes, and Loons will give you your chance to be a camera hog in this frenzied party game. It seems that Yosemite Sam is casting a movie, and it's up to you to impress him by humiliating your fellow Warner Bros. characters with various humorous acts of violence. Features Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and Taz as playable characters.

CEL DAMAGE

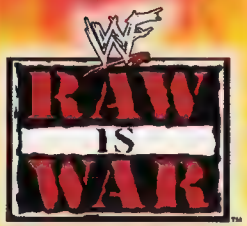
Kind of like Twisted Metal with cartoon characters, Cel Damage doesn't have a dark edge as much as it does a zany one. Gather animated power-ups to take out all others in this game that's best served with four players.



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Rumored to be an Xbox exclusive, this Fox Interactive-produced, EA-published title promises to combine action, fighting, drama, humor, exploration, and puzzle solving in interactive 3D environments. Oh, and it has a hot chick in it, too.

AUTHENTIC SUPERSTAR ENTRANCES WITH TITANTRON™ VIDEO



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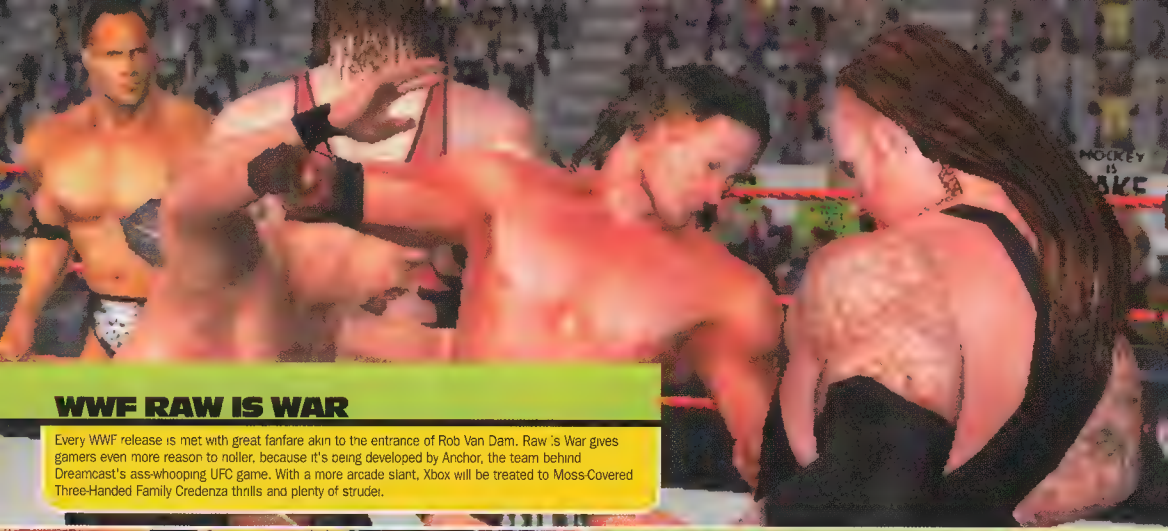
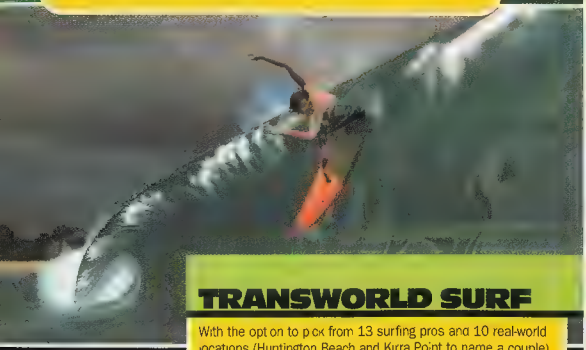


WWF RAW IS WAR

Every WWF release is met with great fanfare akin to the entrance of Rob Van Dam. Raw is War gives gamers even more reason to holler, because it's being developed by Anchor, the team behind Dreamcast's ass-whooping UFC game. With a more arcade slant, Xbox will be treated to Moss-Covered Three-Handed Family Credenza thrills and plenty of strudel.

WRATH

An arena-based fighting game, Wrath puts players in control of giant fantasy beasts loosely based on Greek mythology. This game could be alright, but the fact that one of the characters is a unicorn gives us reservations.

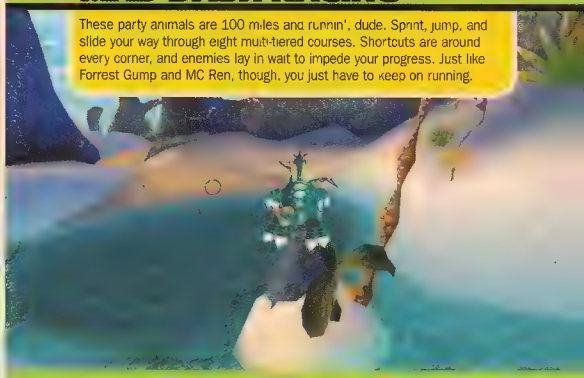


TRANSWORLD SURF

With the option to pick from 13 surfing pros and 10 real-world locations (Huntington Beach and Kirra Point to name a couple), TransWorld Surf will have you hanging a virtual ten through incredible waves and killer surf.

MAD DASH RACING

These party animals are 100 miles and runnin', dude. Sprint, jump, and slide your way through eight multi-tiered courses. Shortcuts are around every corner, and enemies lay in wait to impede your progress. Just like Forrest Gump and MC Ren, though, you just have to keep on running.



AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

Unfortunately, it looks as though Azurik won't be a launch title, but we hope that the extra time the development team gets will enable them to fine-tune the action. Azurik, for those who haven't heard, is a seemless 3D adventure in the vein of Soul Reaver. We still have high hopes for this one, but it's been a while since we've seen it, so here's a little glimpse.

SEGA GT 2002

The original was the Dreamcast's answer to Gran Turismo, and this Xbox sequel promises to be bigger, faster, and better in every way. Look for more on this in our upcoming Tokyo Game Show coverage.

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

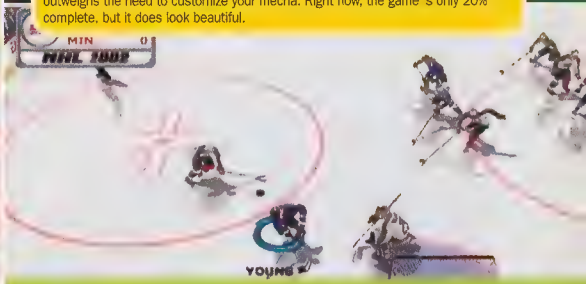
This adventure based on the pencil-and-paper role-playing game, World of Darkness, is sure to raise some eyebrows with its extreme zombie-bashing action. Hunter's gameplay is in the vein of Gauntlet, and up to four players can partake in the carnage.

TEST DRIVE

The racing gangsters at Pitbull Syndicate will be bringing their magic to the Xbox public in a game simply titled Test Drive. The final version should feature over 20 licensed vehicles, including the Dodge Viper GTS and Lotus Esprit, plus a bevy of cool real time lighting and reflection effects.

MURAKUMO

We can't help but shake our heads at From Software. In a not so surprising turn of events, this famed developer's first Xbox title is a mecha game. Instead of following the traditional Armored Core formula, or trying to make gamers design flowcharts like the brain-bending play in ArtDink's Carnage Heart, this new game, titled Murakumo, is designed very much like Konami's Zone of the Enders — where action outweighs the need to customize your mecha. Right now, the game is only 20% complete, but it does look beautiful.



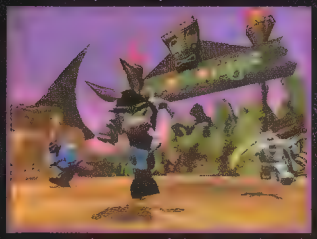
NHL 2002

Much like Madden, the Xbox version of NHL will feature enhanced graphics which include additional arena details, sparkling helmet reflections, and extensive use of motion blurring. All the elements that made the PS2 title a must have are included as well: trade hockey cards with friends; manage a team for 20 consecutive seasons; and learn more about your star players in the Game Story cutscenes. EA promises it'll be on retail shelves this December.

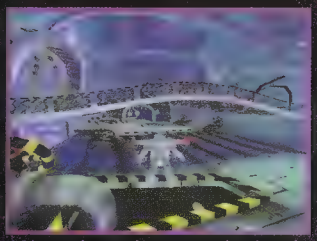

XBOX
TEEN
T
COMIC MISCHIEF
MILD LANGUAGE
MILD LYRICS
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
EIDOS
INTERACTIVE
GAMES WITH CHARACTER
DYNAMICS
ONLY ON
XBOX

Haul ass in ruthless, multi-player combat racing.

Thwart opponents with traps, trickery and explosive attacks.



Race a motley crew of characters through treacherous, obstacle-filled terrains.



An original game design created exclusively for the Xbox™ video game system.

Whatever it takes to win.

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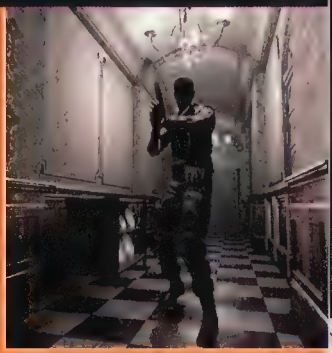
THE BEST OF GAMECUBE

Without much effort, we're pretty sure you can come up with a good idea of the premier titles for GameCube. However, you're reading this magazine, not meditating. Tell your brain to shut up, and take a look at the ten games we think stand out most on Nintendo's new console.

RESIDENT EVIL

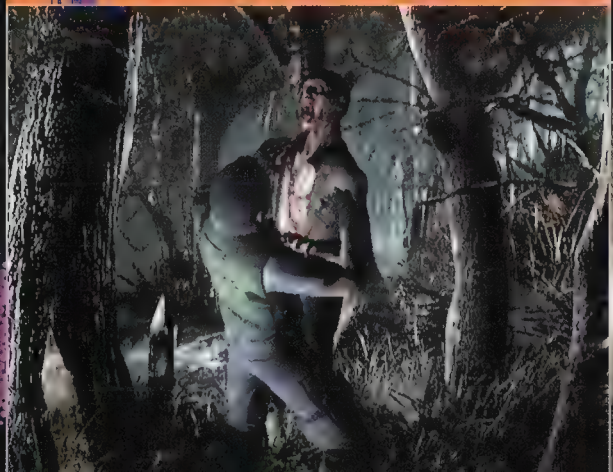
STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM **DEVELOPER** [illegible]
RELEASE [illegible]



Who says Nintendo games are for kids? In a shocking turn of events, Capcom has made the Resident Evil series a GameCube exclusive. For how long? We don't know, but you won't see these games on any other console for what appears to be many years to come. Rather than moving on to the fourth installment (the fifth if you count Code: Veronica), the first survival horror title released for the GameCube will be a remastered version of the original Resident Evil. The Star Wars: Special Editions were well received, and we have a feeling that this Resident Evil rerelease will succeed as well. How could it not?

Looking back at the PlayStation version then comparing it to these new shots is a laughable experience, similar to sizing up an ant next to an elephant. While most of the game will remain true to its founding roots, additional story material and hordes of new enemies are in place to make your second time through seem like your first. Through dimly lit caverns, realistic shadows, and lightning bursts that erupt without warning, the atmosphere now harnesses the true essence of horror. Capcom has also taken the liberty to intensify the gore to barf-a-lific proportions. We had the privilege to see a scene where a Hunter attacks Chris, and before he can retaliate, the beast decapitates him with one claw strike. We looked on in awe, then jumped out of our seats and applauded. Another amazing aspect is the number of zombies Capcom can squeeze into a room. In one of the scenes, Chris is cornered by four flesheaters. This is a tiny hallway, mind you. Now use your imagination and picture what kind of undead army awaits in a larger room. Just thinking about the possibilities gives us shivers.

The Japanese release date is well ahead of what we originally envisioned, stalking retailers on March 22. The US date isn't set in stone yet, but Capcom says it shouldn't be much later than this. Again, this could possibly be the biggest story of the year, and we can't wait to see what Capcom has in store for us with the re-releases of the sequels. Not to mention the never-released N64 prequel, RE Zero.

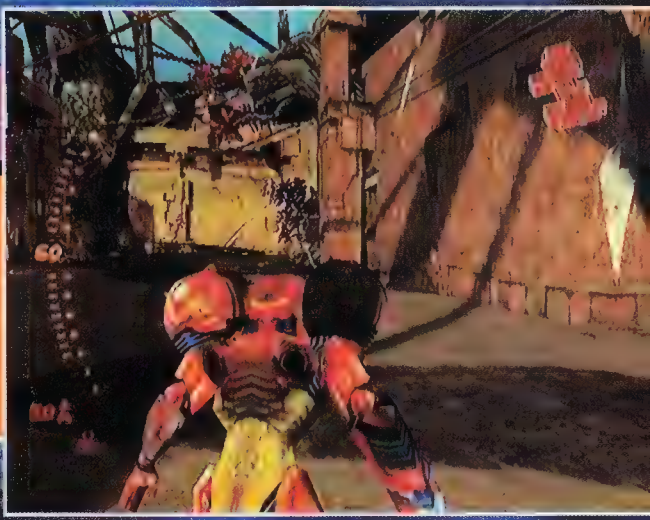


METROID PRIME

STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE/SHOOTER **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO
DEVELOPER [illegible] **RELEASE** [illegible]

When we first heard about the direction Nintendo was taking with Metroid, our reaction was sour grapes. Recently though, we've learned that the game switches from first-person to third-person when an action like jumping or rolling is executed. If Retro can pull this formula off, something that hasn't been successfully captured on a console, Metroid Prime could in fact become the stellar title we've been waiting a decade for.

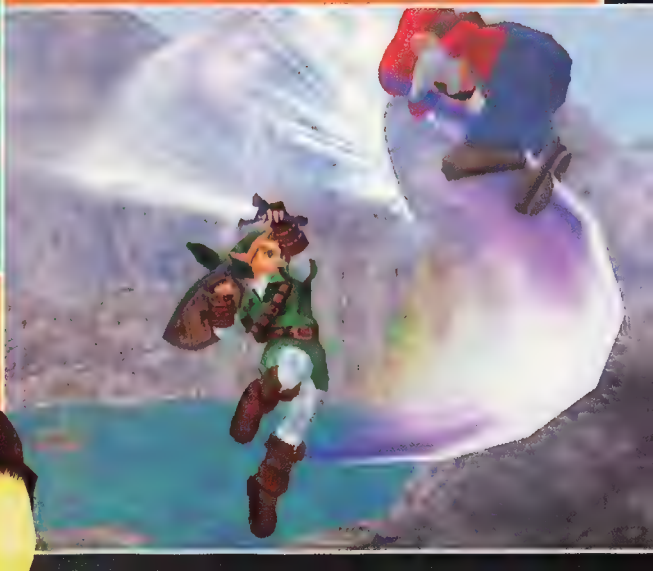
The fact that Retro has quietly shelved all of its projects except Metroid leads us to believe that everyone down in this Austin, Texas studio is working to make Metroid the triple-A title it so rightfully deserves to be. We've seen some of the first-person gameplay running, and it has a Turok feel to it. Of course, the visuals are incredible, most notably the animation for the bugs that Samus battles. Right now, Nintendo says Metroid should be ready for a 2002 release, but we have a feeling that it will probably slide into 2003.



SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE

STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO **DEVELOPER** HAL/NINTENDO **RELEASE** DECEMBER 3

Similar to what happens when superheroes meet in comic books, Nintendo's cavalcade of icons do what's expected of them in this all-star get-together – fight! In this sequel to the Nintendo 64 brawl for it all, not only is there a hefty beefing-up in graphics, game speed, and special moves, but a handful of new characters come with the package. With Princess Peach, Bowser, Sheik, and the Ice Climbers in the fray, multiplayer will be more hectic than ever. But going at it with friends isn't all there is to Super Smash Bros. Melee. Major expansion is coming for the solo game, which will have to be played if GameCube owners hope to unlock all the extra arenas, modes, and other secrets this title has to offer.



STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/MISSILE SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** FACTOR 5/LUCASARTS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER

Through 11 missions, plus a handful of additional stages hidden within, players will confront AT-AT walkers on Hoth, visit Jabba the Hutt on Tatooine, and bombard a fully operational Star Destroyer. Dennis Lawson has come out of retirement to reprise his role as Wedge Antilles and fly side-by-side with his longtime pal, Luke Skywalker. Out of all the GameCube launch titles, Rogue Leader best represents this console's graphical capabilities. Pushing up to 15 million polygons per second, and utilizing up to five layers of texturing, the level of detail is truly staggering. The gameplay is almost identical to the fore-founding N64 installment, but additional play mechanics have been added. You'll now be able to bring up a targeting sensor, command grounds troops, and launch a torpedo into the heart of the Death Star.

A large stockade of vehicles, including the B-Wing, X-Wing, A-Wing, and Y Wing, are all available. Rumor has it that the Millennium Falcon, plus several other ships, can be unlocked through gaining Gold Medals.

SOUL CALIBUR 2

■ **STYLE** 1-OR-2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO ■ **DEVELOPER**

When it launched with the Dreamcast, Soul Calibur became the console's definitive fighting game. Although the sequel isn't arriving on US shores simultaneously with GameCube, Soul Calibur 2's sure to be a tough act to follow. Not one to risk sticking an overhaul wrench into the machine of a winning formula, the development team has gone on record to say the goal is to create a look close to the Dreamcast, and to not have any major gameplay revisions. Is this a bad thing? Give us an expanded Mission mode and more things to spend our points on, and we'll be happy.

LUIGI'S MANSION

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER [illegible]
■ RELEASE [illegible]

Mario is missing...again! Certainly, everyone is disappointed that Nintendo didn't have a new Mario title ready for the GameCube launch, but if you take the time to explore Luigi's Mansion, you'll see that this plumbing expert is hidden within. Actually, the entire premise of this game revolves around Luigi searching for his brother, who just happens to have gotten lost in this ghost-infested manor. With a vacuum cleaner securely fastened on his back, Luigi must suck up every ghost he sees, and solve the puzzles that lead to Mario's whereabouts. This may not be the blockbuster title you were hoping for, but its gameplay is completely unique, and its graphics show off some of the flashy new effects that the GameCube can deliver. For more details see the review on page 114.

When The Legend of Zelda made its debut at Space World 2000, it appeared as though the series would take on realism like never before. Sadly, this artistic direction has been scrapped and replaced with the cartoon graphics you see to the left

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER NINTENDO
■ RELEASE [illegible]

Mario uses pipes to transport to different worlds. After seeing the new artistic direction for the Zelda series, it can be assumed that Miyamoto is using a pipe of his own (wink wink). At first, we were completely dumbfounded and couldn't believe Miyamoto would do something this drastic. Since that time, the cel-shaded Link has grown on us, and even though we still find the original Zelda GameCube tech demo to be more attractive, we agree that the series was in need of a change.

The essence of the game has transformed to that of a cartoon, and the gameplay appears to be somewhat of a departure as well. While the combat still harnesses many of the techniques used in the N64 series, exploration now houses stealth aspects. In one gameplay segment, Link clings to a wall and peeks around the corner – just like Snake does in Metal Gear Solid 2. We have the feeling that the game will feature more scripted sequences as well. For example, we've witnessed a gameplay/cutscene hybrid with Link confronting a horde of creatures. A chase segment ensues with Link running toward the camera. At the end, Link jumps to a chandelier, and the beasts, which try to stop, slip and fall into a pit.

As of late, Miyamoto has steered away from the traditional story, and we're hoping this new GameCube episode follows suit. On the other hand, we'd love to see what Ganon looks like as a goofy cartoon character.

PIKMIN

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO
■ DEVELOPER [illegible] ■ RELEASE [illegible]

Pikmin personifies Nintendo's philosophy for first party games by being original as hell and cute as the dickens. Dreamt up by Miyamoto while he was gardening, Pikmin puts players in the role of a crash-landed spaceman no bigger than the foreign planet's fauna. To get the pieces needed to reassemble your craft, you'll have to gather and train the native plant creatures which the game is named after. By ordering around hundreds of these multi-hued sprouts, you'll be challenged to overcome the many obstacles and beasts that would normally be too much for a lone Pikmin. Still-shots of this game don't do it justice, since only by seeing the vibrant, living world in action will you understand how revolutionary Pikmin truly is.

STAR FOX ADVENTURES: DINOSAUR PLANET

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE/SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER**
■ **RELEASE**

This won't be the first time we get to control Fox McCloud outside his Arwing, but it's a new experience altogether, as former N64 game Dinosaur Planet has been added to it. In protecting Prince Tricky and his whole planet from General Scales, players will embark on an Ocarina of Time-esque mission-based journey that includes magical staffs, multiple-character control, and old Star Fox friends and levels. As Miyamoto explained when he unveiled the GameCube at E3, this title cuts down on unnecessary button presses by relying primarily on the A button. The C Stick, meanwhile, will allow you access to your menu items. Star Fox Adventures is sharper-looking than its E3 build, and should continue to improve.

MARIO SUNSHINE

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER**
■ **RELEASE**

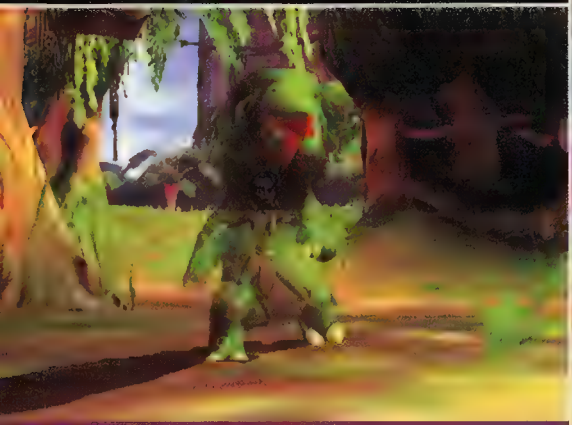
We'll never understand why Nintendo only released one Mario title for the Nintendo 64. Admittedly, this is the biggest franchise in gaming, and we expected to see at least a sequel or two. The drought appears to be over, or at least it will be come late next year. At this year's Space World show (see issue #102), Shigeru Miyamoto, the father of this Italian plumber, at long last debuted the next installment in the Mario series. Even with the strange title of Mario Sunshine, this is indeed a direct follow-up to the Nintendo 64 release. Mario can still double jump his way up walls, sneak on narrow ledges, and pick up and carry objects. The most noticeable change, something we're completely baffled by, is the large contraption on his back. From what we understand, it's actually a water cannon. Taking this into consideration, and the name of the game, we believe that the land is scorched and Mario must use this mechanism to stay hydrated. In one of the screenshots, Mario is hiding in the shade under a tree. Another guess is that whoever, or whatever, is menacing the land commands the fire elemental, and Mario must use water to combat this force.

Since the N64 precursor, Mario's appearance has changed drastically. His flat-shaded overalls now have corduroy texturing, and all his fingers are fully articulated. The world is also much larger, spanning as far as the eye can see. Instead of collecting Stars, it appears as though Mario must now collect Suns. What next? Moons?

Nintendo hasn't set a release date yet, but all signs point toward 2002 holiday season. We can't wait!

THE REST OF GAMECUBE

Many video game companies are realizing that it's hip to be square, and have projects in the works for the quadratic console. Following is a good smattering of what you can expect to come out for the GameCube in the near future. Remember these names; you may be screaming them later.



KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER

Kameo is the name of a young girl with the ability to capture and train wild animals, then command them in battle or assume one of their forms at will. She must put these skills to the test in her search for six elemental children across a number of lands.

SSX TRICKY

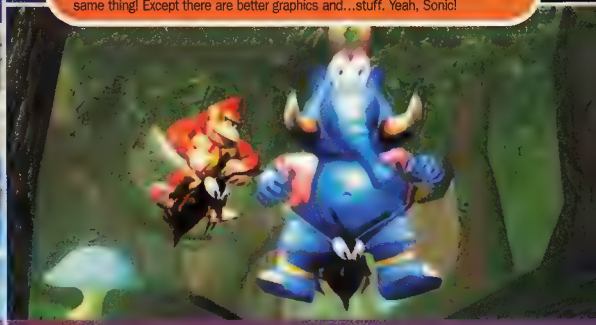
SSX Tricky will be a welcome addition to the GameCube library especially for the Nintendo loyalists who never bought into the PS2 hype. If you've already played the original, this semi-sequel boasts celebrity voices, trick and race runs, enhanced AI, and a handful of new riders.

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

Duke Nukem Forever once again pits Dr. Proton against Duke as a group of aliens (who are suspected to be linked to Dr. Proton) capture the President and begin wreaking havoc on humanity. The only man standing in the way is Mr. Nukem. Have at it, Duke!

SONIC ADVENTURE 2

Take the Dreamcast version of this title, put it on GameCube, and you get...the same thing! Except there are better graphics and...stuff. Yeah, Sonic!

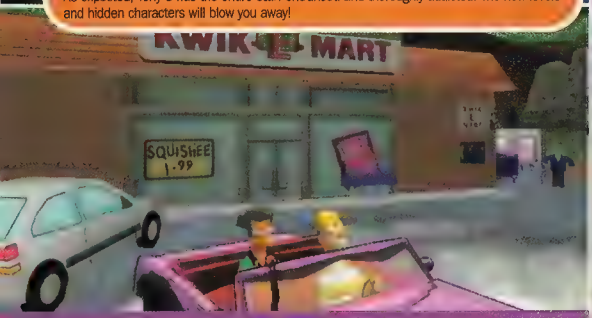


DONKEY KONG RACING

Nintendo's golden child, Rare, is hard at work with Donkey Kong Racing – a title which will showcase franchise characters in various jungle locations based on Donkey Kong locales. In lush jungles crawling with life, you and up to three other people will pilot your animals of choice through wild tracks.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

This time around, Nintendo fans won't have to wait a year and a half to get their hands on the latest Tony Hawk title. Sources tell us that Tony 3 may even sneak into the GameCube launch lineup, which would be just a few weeks after the October 30 PlayStation 2 release. As expected, Tony 3 has the entire staff entranced and thoroughly addicted. The new levels and hidden characters will blow you away!



THE SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE

Ralph Wiggum needs to get home, and his cat's breath smells like cat food. This EA/Fox Interactive venture has members of the Simpsons taking Springfieldians (Hans Moleman, Comic Book Guy, etc.) to various points of interest (Lard Lad Donuts, Frying Dutchman, etc.). Earning money unlocks new drivers and starting positions. You can also drool over the ten minigame missions.

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

Dave Mirra is known for huge air, but even we were stunned when we saw the next-gen leap his game made when we played it on PS2. With absolutely mammoth levels and an almost ridiculously detailed level editor, Acclaim's freestyle hero will make an impact for GameCube when the system launches, as well.

CRAZY TAXI

Acclaim made some crazy money with this Sega license for PlayStation 2, so there's nothing holding it back from another port on GameCube. Take the priest to church, and he'll call you one hell of a driver. Master the Crazy Drift to pick up tips. It's nothing new, but it's still a hoot.

NHL HITZ

The bone-rattling excitement of arcade hockey knows no equal. You want to make something of it, huh? You don't even have a mullet. You can't hang. The boys at Midway have more on-ice cred than both the Hanson brothers and the McKenzie brothers put together, you hoser. Hitz is high-speed hockey heaven that is cooler than a dead octopus on the rink.

PREVIEWS

PLAYSTATION 2

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE

STORMING THE PLAYSTATION 2

As World War II rages on, Lt. Jimmy Patterson, the main character from the original Medal of Honor, has been reinstated and asked to utilize the confusion brought about by Operation Market Garden to penetrate the German frontline and hijack the Nazis' experimental weapon, the HO-IX flying wing. If he doesn't succeed in his mission, the Nazis could use this weapon to turn the tides. It's up to PlayStation 2 owners to quell the Axis threat in EA's first next-gen Medal of Honor title.

Throughout five lengthy missions, each consisting of at least three distinct segments, Lt. Patterson's assignments will involve key tactical strikes such as obliterating a German Naval base, rescuing an OSS operative from a Dutch manor, and defusing the undercarriage of Nijmegen Bridge (as seen in the film, *A Bridge Too Far*). In several of the missions, Lt. Patterson will use disguises to go undercover, searching for top secret parchments and vehicle locations. If he can't blend with the foe, force will be needed. To this end, there are 20 different weapons in the game ranging from the Liberator to the popular B.A.R.

While running and gunning is somewhat efficient, players will find the highest level of success by strategically planning attacks. For example, if you snipe an enemy commander, the troops will panic, giving you the perfect opportunity to clean house with a well-lobbed grenade. If you stumble into a den of rats that seems too much for Patterson to handle, you'll be able to communicate with allies to organize tactics.

On the PlayStation, battle sequences consisted of just a few troops onscreen. In Frontline, scenarios such as the raid on Normandy Beach are overflowing with soldiers, tracer bullets, and explosions. To round out the experience, composer Michael Giacchino is constructing an original score for Frontline, and the AIAS award winning design team is once again handling all of the sound effects in the game.

The PlayStation 2 is already overflowing with first-person shooters, but we have a feeling that Medal of Honor will tower above them all. World War II is a touchy subject, but as we've seen through two installments already, you really couldn't ask for a more realistic or gripping re-creation. While some may think it just a game, it's more an interactive history lesson that covers just about every aspect of the war, putting players closer to the intense emotions of WWII than any movie could. Suit up, soldier. The war begins again this March.

Can you say *Saving Private Ryan*?

The enemy AI is very aggressive. As you can see, they'll seek cover and attack from a safe vantage point

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** EA GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** EALA/DREAMWORKS
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 2002

D-Day

The graphical improvements showcase shadow casting, tracer fire, and highly detailed character models

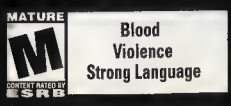
The goal of the game is to track down the Nazis' secret weapon, the HO-IX flying wing

Dozens of soldiers can be displayed onscreen

"A MAFIOSO MASTERPIECE" - MAXIM

grand theft auto III

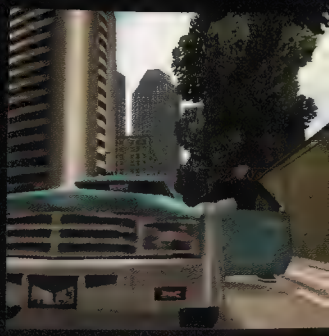
WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/GRANDTHEFTAUTO3



Blood
Violence
Strong Language

Note: Rockstar will be following IDSA guidelines for M rated games in the marketing of this game.
This game contains violent language and behavior and is not intended for persons under the age of 17. It is a comic interpretation of gangster activity and the story, names and incidents portrayed herein are fictitious. No identification or similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is intended or should be inferred. Any resemblance is coincidental. The makers and publishers of this videogame do not in any way endorse, condone or encourage this kind of behavior.

"GRAND THEFT AUTO 3 EXPANDS THE VERY IDEA OF WHAT A GAME HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN"
– IGN.COM



COMING OCTOBER 2001

PlayStation®2

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Playing chicken with a soccer mom

You gotta love the traffic-chopper camera

PLAYSTATION 2

BURNOUT

CRUNCH TIME

Racing games, for the most part, are controlled affairs. Everyone is headed in the same direction with one purpose in mind – winning. The track is cut off from the outside world, save for those fearless spectators ballsy enough to lounge behind mesh fencing just to see the blur of speeding steel go past every minute or so. This may satisfy some gamers, but others want more.

What of those people who are stuck in rush-hour traffic, picking their nose while time stands still? How about the poor souls on the highway in the rain, cursing the herd of Sunday drivers lowering their speeds to 30 mph because of their fear of water? Let us not forget the tormented drivers with sports cars in the dead of night, who have to battle their conscience over whether to see just how fast their vehicles will go. All of them need a voice; an outlet. The answer is here. The answer is Burnout.

Burnout starts out much like any other racing game you've ever played. Pick from a selection of vehicles (pickups, sports coupes, a bus, etc.), choose your track (over a dozen available), and try not to yawn too much. Then, per usual, you get out on the open road, ready to watch the scenery go by and attempt to keep drowsiness from setting in. This game isn't half bad, though. Your car handles like a dream, complete with some sweet powerslide moves. The environments are lifelike and very detailed; par for the PlayStation 2 course. And wait – what's this? There's traffic all around you. Why, this is almost like real life. Play a little more, and you may come to realize this could be the coolest racing game gimmick to come down the pipe in a long time.

In each track, literally hundreds of vehicles go on their merry way. Some travel the same direction as you. Others are going the opposite way. Still more will be crossing you at intersections. Each computer-controlled driver has its own AI. Drive into oncoming traffic, and there will be those who veer out of your path, while some panic and head right toward you. Those going with your flow will sometimes pull over so you can pass, or stubbornly maintain their position.

Pull off a few moves and you earn some Burn, which allows for a speed boost and even more white-knuckle insanity. Drift a long distance, and pick up a little. Driving against traffic for a while will get some more. Narrowly avoid a collision, and you'll be that much closer. A meter in the lower corner of your screen shows you when you've received the speed hook-up.

With all this risky riding going on, sooner or later you're going to have to pay the piper (and the mechanic). Crashes are amazing spectacles, complete with total vehicle damage, particle effects, and mind-blowing physics. Wrecks get replayed from several different camera angles, allowing you to see just where you screwed up, and what the after-effect was. You can even save them. Burnout is set to blow up just in time for Christmas.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM ■ **DEVELOPER** CRITERION ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13

Big vehicles play ping-pong with your grocery grabber

Smaller cars sometimes fly through the air

Split-screen maintains the high level of detail

Close your eyes and lay on the horn

Each "accident" shows you...

...multiple angles of your demise

PC

WORLD OF WARCRAFT

I BUILT A FLYING MACHINE!

Gather 'round, all ye Warcraft faithful, as we regale you with the story of your favorite game, taking a form you've never seen before. Many of you have participated in the massively multiplayer experience. Some have liked it, some have not. More still have clung to their aging copies of the Warcraft series and continue to play them with fanatical resolve. Perhaps the missing piece of the puzzle for many gamers out there is the amalgamation of these popular institutions into one big Warcraft frenzy of fun. Blizzard, hearing your pleas for gaming expansion, has taken it upon itself to give you what you want. Massively multiplayer Warcraft is on its way.

The work Blizzard has christened World of Warcraft has actually been in development for well over a year. Announced at this year's European Computer Trade Show, WoW (we promise not to make any bad puns concerning this game's abbreviation) stunned the crowd with its aim and scope. Many caught wind of the rumor that Blizzard would announce a title of this genus, but when it was learned that Warcraft was going online in a role-playing genre instead of the familiar isometric real-time strategy realm we're all accustomed to, there was a flurry of excitement. It was also announced that WoW will be set four years after Warcraft III (which still has months to go before its eventual release), and that it will be an action/RPG.

Taking notes from other online RPGs, the development team noticed that it sucks when you're sitting around for extended periods of time waiting for your character to heal or your mana to replenish. With this invaluable information in hand, Blizzard has embarked upon a gameplay track which is much more action-oriented. Much of the play and combat will be fast-paced, to get rid of the wasteful downtime many other online RPGs exhibit. Along with this, officials have disclosed that the game will take a much more minimalist approach when it comes to the interface. Seeking to cut down on the amount of screen clutter many other MMORPGs exhibit, World of Warcraft artisans are promising the simple interface will not detract from the complexity of the game – it will simply make it easier to play.

At this point, there will be three races available to choose from during character creation. The familiar Orcs and Humans will of course be present, but a new minotaur-like species, called Taurens (which will be introduced in Warcraft III), is also accessible. Though still in early development, spokespeople from Blizzard have made clear the idea that the character-creation phase will be infused with many customizable features, thereby allowing you to build a character who won't look like everyone else. Graphically, WoW is looking to create a highly stylized version of Azeroth, but with the familiar Warcraft feel. At this point, the game is a long way off, and Blizzard has a tendency to hold things until they're quite polished. But absence makes the heart grow fonder, right?

Blizzard has concentrated on making the interface easy to use

■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** BLIZZARD
■ **DEVELOPER** BLIZZARD ■ **RELEASE** 4TH QUARTER 2002

Talk about hairy legs!

There will be plenty of action to experience

Spiky shoulders and big hammers are all the rage in Azeroth

PLAYSTATION 2

DRAKAN II

RETURN TO FANTASY

If you've been burned by Portal Runner, Drakan II might just be the balm that heals your wounds. Yes, it is possible to create a decent action/adventure game starring a hot female that doesn't suck – we promise – and thus far, Drakan II is shaping up to be an impressive and lengthy adventure.

Our heroine, Rynn, has been charged with the task of freeing her homeland of Surdana from the evil Desert Lords. Lady Myschala, the leader of the realm, has selected Rynn and her dragon, Arokh, to open the Dragon Eye – a portal to the Age of Sleep.

As you explore Surdana, you'll encounter many citizens who reveal information or sidequests. Rynn gains gold pieces for every mission completed, which can be used to upgrade her equipment and magic. Interspersed between the fairly typical action/adventure levels, which feature gameplay similar to Draconus or Rune: Viking Warlord, is some awesome aerial dragon combat. Utilizing a dual-analog control scheme and an excellent lock-on targeting system, the fireball-slinging action is very satisfying.

Right now, Drakan II is at a very precarious point in development. On the one hand, this ambitious project already displays a great deal of depth and variety, and allows you to engage in everything from character enhancement to swordplay to spellcasting. On the other, there are significant graphical and control problems that, if not corrected, could hamstring this otherwise excellent title.

You'll have to battle many types of gruesome creatures on your journey

I did, but the trees were too dense. I'm afraid I'll need you t
The storyline is told through real-time cutscenes

The combat engine uses a nice lock-on targeting system

Last month, Orko made an appearance in our Envelope Art section; this month Skeletor stops by in Previews. Next month – Moss Man in GI Spy!

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** SURREAL SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 30

PLAYSTATION 2

DEUS EX: THE CONSPIRACY

A SHEEP TO SAVE THE SHEPHERDS

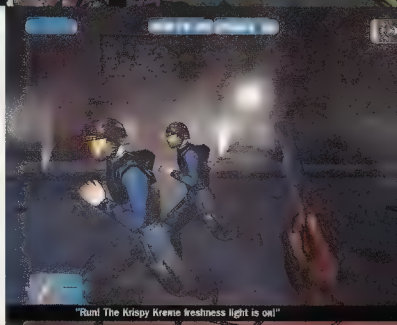
While the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. Such is civilization. With this constant power struggle comes societal collapse. The world is one ticking time bomb, and those who would most like to see it go off remain hidden under the radar of the powers that be.

The greatest trick the Devil ever played was convincing the world he didn't exist. It appears no one acknowledges your fears of a global conspiracy. You have seen the proof and know action is necessary for survival. Thus, you're left alone, sacrificing all you hold dear to protect those who doubt you. Your number is one.

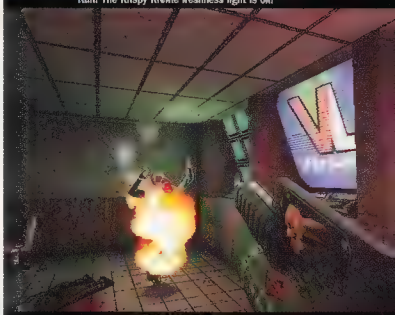
Deus Ex is an epic first-person journey which goes above and beyond FPS classification. Both your character and his weapons can gain points that affect performance. If you like the thrill of the snipe, then use skill points to improve your marksmanship. If you'd rather go the postal route, you can become a machine gunner extraordinaire. Basically, you can choose whether your gameplay tactics will be stealthy or balls-out action. Things are further complicated by adding in noncombative elements like sneaky lock-picking and computer geekery. Because of these other talents, there is rarely a solitary solution to the problems presented. Non-player characters play a major role in plot development, as does your interaction with them.

The PC predecessor to this PlayStation 2 update was critically acclaimed, and Eidos saw fit to improve the winning formula even further. The graphics have been overhauled to compete with the best we've seen on PS2. Particle effects will further immerse you in the adventure, with pyrotechnics that leap off the screen and fire that sizzles realistically. Character models have been given a higher polygon count, as well as an improved skeletal animation system. Deus Ex's controls have also been tweaked, to be more suitable for the Dual Shock 2 controller. Auto aiming will make killin' and blood spillin' that much easier.

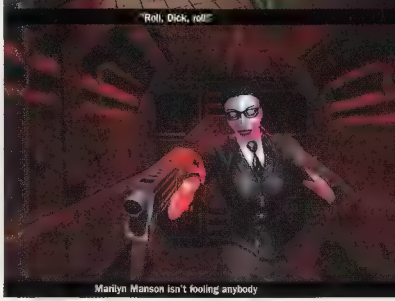
Console first-person shooters have continued their evolution, with titles the likes of Red Faction and Halo challenging the best PC FPSs have to offer. Deus Ex: The Conspiracy may have the firepower to cap all other games of this genre right between the eyes.



"Run! The Krispy Kreme freshness light is on!"

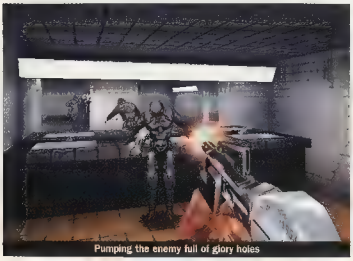


"Roll, Dick, roll!"

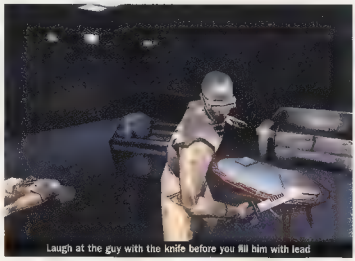


Marilyn Manson isn't fooling anybody

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** ION STORM
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13

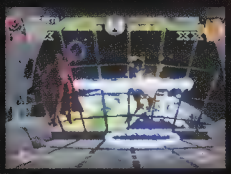


Pumping the enemy full of glory holes

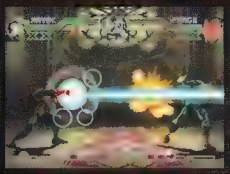


Laugh at the guy with the knife before you fill him with lead

TAKE FIGHTING TO NEW HEIGHTS



Fight as 10 X-MEN from the original roster and 6 new X-MEN: Rogue, Nightcrawler, Havok, Forge and 2 secret characters.



Perform signature mutant moves—even stunning aerial combat—in 10 of the original arenas, plus 6 new locations.

Go solo or take on a friend as you fight to dominate the arena. Enjoy 4 modes of play: Academy, Training, Arcade and Versus.

X-MEN 2 MUTANT ACADEMY

PlayStation

MARVEL
www.marvel.com

EVERYONE E
Violence

ACTIVISION
activision.com

PLAYSTATION 2

NBA LIVE 2002

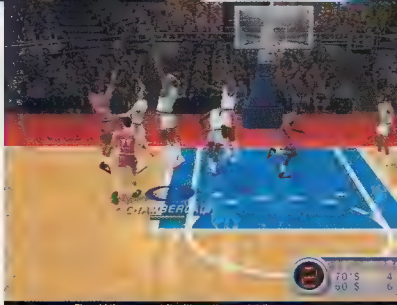
FUNDERBURKE MY WANG, BIBBY

Being the champion of your conference doesn't matter all that much at the end of the day. Every team knows its number-one goal is to win the whole thing. NBA Live, having won the championship year in and year out, has almost become a given to bring home the crown. But last year, one season removed from its inaugural campaign, NBA 2K1 came in and took the title. It wasn't even that close of a contest, with Sega's Dreamcast game holding court on Franchise mode, player models, and overall gameplay mechanics. Not one to take defeat sitting down (on the rare occasion it gets dealt a loss), EA put in overtime to make NBA Live 2002 a force to be reckoned with.

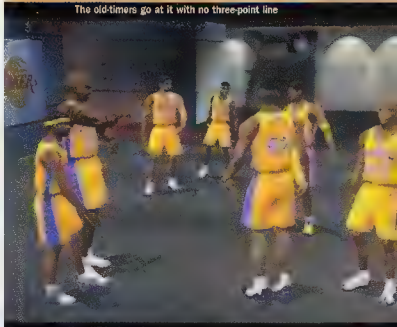
Zone defense. It's allowed now, whether you like it or not. It's also in Live, and defenses will take full advantage. To compete with this new trick, the team with possession of the ball has refined moves allowing easier access to the hole. The cross-over works much better, and will result in many more broken ankles than steals. The post game has also been improved, taking a tip from NBA 2K1.

Presentation seemed to be Live's key off-season focus. Graphical upgrades in player models and the crowd are immediately noticeable. Body parts are more animated and articulate, expressions change often, and collision is better than ever. Cutscenes accompany almost every break in gameplay, and are entertaining to watch. Teams huddle up before hitting the arena. Centers pound their chest in dominance after a big block. The team that is down at the half leaves the court with their heads held low. It goes a long way to adding personality to the onscreen characters.

All these little nuances don't make the difference between completing an 82-game season or quitting early, though. Longevity is achieved through modes. Finally and triumphantly, NBA Live has a Franchise mode, which is sure to keep you hoopin' things up well past the real NBA's regular season. Aside from a full-on draft before beginning, all the management options you could ask for are here. Keep track of your salary points to orchestrate trades, sign free agents, or trade for new talent during the span of ten years. Individual and team statistics are kept in 32 and 36 different categories, respectively. The computer can run trades on its own, and you can even change up the style and abilities of your team's players. The king has returned to claim his throne.



The old-timers go at it with no three-point line



Your NBA champion Lakers get pumped pre-game

Player faces have a new level of detail

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 6

Sorry, KG – that's some goaltending

Live has a nice create-a-player feature


BAWLS®
GUARANA
High Caffeine Guarana Beverage
BAWLS
GUARANA
Special non-slip bottle
for when your hands start shaking.
Stay Up–Drink BAWLS
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Lush 3D environments await you in each level

PC

BATTLE REALMS

THE RTS REVOLUTION

As more and more real-time strategy titles come to market, developers and publishers alike are searching for ways to make their entries as original and attractive as possible. Some companies take previous successes and outfit them with bigger and better gameplay molds. Others delve into the online world. A few have decided to attack the genre from an entirely new direction. Liquid Entertainment is one of these companies, and its offering is none other than Battle Realms.

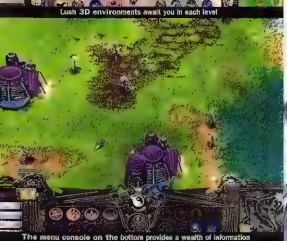
Under the guidance of Ed Del Castillo (formerly a Command & Conquer producer), Liquid is concentrating on producing an RTS with a rich story and a robust 3D engine. On the gameplay side of things, Battle Realms will use this foundation to combine what has been dubbed a "Living Resource System" with a detailed combat model to make sure your butt stays glued to your seat for a long time.

The Living Resource System was built upon the idea that the world in which you play is alive. Thus, anything you can manipulate in your environment has the potential to become a resource for your burgeoning colony. For example, there may be horses in your vicinity – you're able to capture them and train mounted soldiers, or perhaps use them as pack animals for your peasants, thereby increasing the amount they can carry. Peasants, who represent another resource, will be the mainstay of your tribe. Not only do they train to become warriors for your tribe, they're also used to harvest rice and water from the surrounding terrain.

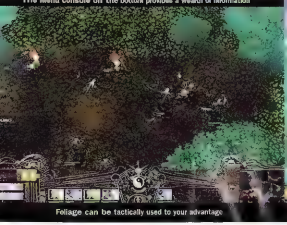
Players begin building their armies after the main character, Kenji, returns to his war-torn home. He must choose how he wants to reclaim this once-great territory: through the honorable Dragon Clan, or the insidious Serpent Clan. Either selection will launch a separate adventure, each with its own unique outcome. To aid in your quest, Zen Masters are made available to your armies. These units are persistent throughout the story, and will grant you many different advantages. Some will be battle-hungry titans who improve the effectiveness of your troops in battle and unleash gigantic magical attacks; others hang around towns and enhance production.

Along with Zen Masters, numerous other play-enhancing goodies doubtlessly await us. We're very interested to see how this next-gen RTS pans out, but from the look of things now, the future of this popular genre seems to be rosy indeed.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** CRAVE ■ **DEVELOPER** LIQUID ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 30



The menu console on the bottom provides a wealth of information



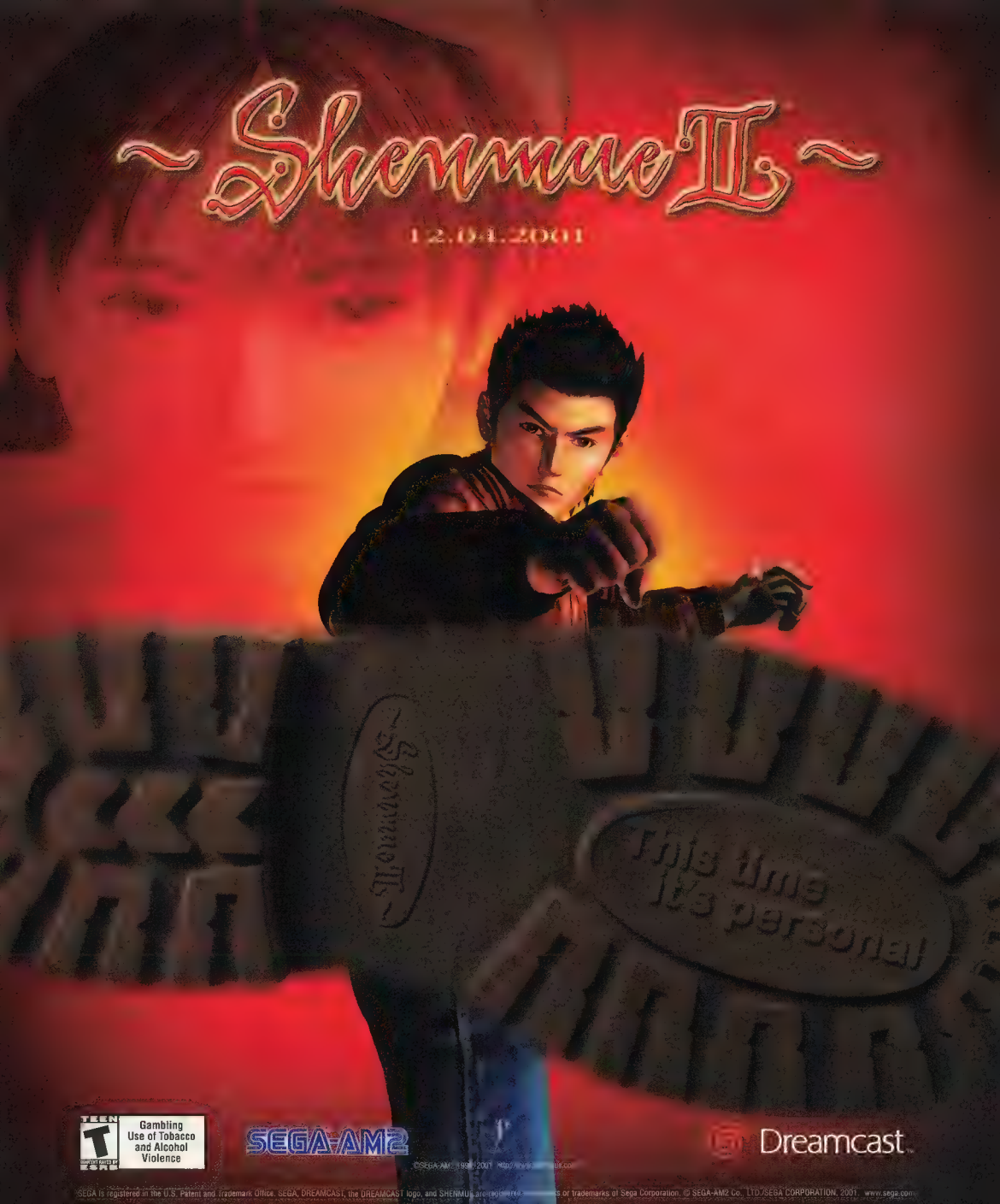
Foliage can be tactically used to your advantage

During the 36 different single-player scenarios, peasants gather the resources that fuel the tribe

Troops gather for battle

~Shenmue II~

12.04.2001



PLAYSTATION 2

SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS

SOCOM IF YOU GOT 'EM

With all the hubbub and foofaraw surrounding the launch of the Xbox and GameCube, many are forgetting Sony's online plans waiting in the wings. Many upcoming PlayStation 2 titles will include broadband features allowing players to clandestinely rendezvous in the middle of the night, but SOCOM: US Navy Seals is the only original game designed specifically to take your new peripheral to the bandwidth limit.

A squad-based game in the Rainbow Six vein, SOCOM allows up to eight players to band together and go against another team of eight. The environments are designed to be taken advantage of, so a full-bore, gun-blazing bum rush will likely result in a FUBAR situation. The game's 30 weapons, four real-world locations, and varying weather conditions promote collaboration in digging out the entrenched enemies, and it's likely that many tight-knit teams will be formed soon after SOCOM hits the shelves.

In its early form, SOCOM did little to impress the eyes. As these screens hopefully illustrate, though, leaps and bounds are being made graphically as the game comes along. If the whole package comes together, which appears to be happening, this will be the defining title in the PS2's online assault.

"Ha, ha, I am so well camouflaged, you think there is nothing but a floating gun in this picture."

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** ZIPPER INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY

PLAYSTATION 2

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2

PREPARE FOR PARAPPTURE

Since his debut on PlayStation, which was the first in a long line of music/rhythm games brought to the US, PaRappa has held our hearts in his little puppy paw. Much like a cartoon Bushwick Bill, we have anxiously awaited his next solo release. After a long delay, the canine cometh.

PaRappa's surrealistically flat universe hasn't changed much, despite the bump to PlayStation 2 technology. Becoming a respected playa' hasn't tainted the homedawg's spirit, either. He's still just chilling around town, hanging with his friends and sweatin' Sunny Funny. One fateful day, something turns his world upside down: noodles. Everything is turning to noodles, and nobody knows how or why.

Both to save the day and to show Sunny that he's not the baby she thinks he is, PaRappa sets out to get to the bottom of the debacle. Through eight stages, the dope rhyme-sayer' meets up with teachers new and old. It starts innocently enough at Beard Burger, where a simple order results in our boy making patties with an Amish ghost. Other exploits include a tentacled hairdresser giving everyone afros, growing and shrinking with a dashiki-wearing ant, and kicking around with Romantic Karate as Chop Chop Master Onion macks on a honey.

You won't find much new to learn if you're a veteran of this genre, but PaRappa does throw a few new features all up in your area. Multiplayer is now a showdown where you try to outdo each other while freestyling off the same line. When you beat the game, you're rewarded with a new hat color. Going through the same stages again brings different, remixed lyrics, preventing you from memorizing levels. This adds replay like you wouldn't believe.

Unlike the first go-around, this time PaRappa has loads of competition from games like Gitaroo Man and Dance Dance Revolution. Can the rhyming mutt take the title? Will this game even come to the US? We'll give you the answers soon.

Return to the Fruites Dojo in the bonus level

Lammy lends her support and guitar riffs

PaRappa gets a Cool, making Colonel Noodle step off

PaRappa schools Hairdresser Octopus in multiplayer

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT JAPAN ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT JAPAN ■ **RELEASE** TBA

PLAYSTATION 2

VICTORIOUS BOXERS: IPPO'S ROAD TO GLORY

SO REAL IT HURTS

The boxing genre has recorded a handful of hits ranging from the age-old classic Mike Tyson's Punch-Out! to the current heavyweight champion, Knockout Kings. If not for Empire Interactive's keen importing eye, what is being heralded as "the most accurate boxing game ever conceived" may not have made the journey to American soil.

Even though it's drawn in a goofy anime style, Victorious Boxers' gameplay is as realistic as it comes. You won't find special moves, a health meter, or any video game fixations in this title. The design reflects the highest degree of realism. If you throw too many punches, you'll feel your character tire. If you let your guard down and take a few hits to the head, your character will stagger, and struggle in his delivery. Through precise analog movement, you'll dance, bob, and duck like never before.

All of the punches, including slip jabs and uppercuts, are in place with a unique delivery system. Depth is also represented with an interesting Story mode, and over 40 characters from four different weight divisions. We had the lowest of expectations for Victorious Boxers, but once we got our hands on it, we couldn't put it down. We think you'll agree that this is exactly what the boxing genre needs.

Enhance your abilities by training in the gym

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EMPIRE INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** NEW CORPORATION ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 23

GAME BOY ADVANCE

WARIO LAND 4

WIPE THEM OUT, ALL OF THEM

Not since LaToya Jackson has a sibling displayed such evil tendencies. As Mario continues his conquest against Bowser, and Luigi toils with spirits of the afterworld, Wario is reaping the land of all its riches. This time around, he has his beady little eyes set on the treasures buried within the tombs of the Golden Pyramid.

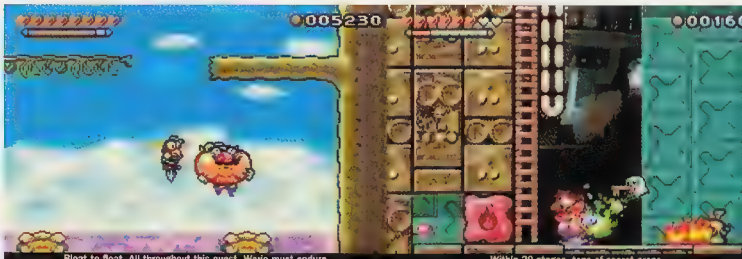
As unjust as his adventures may be, the gaming nation has placed this criminal mastermind on a pedestal, and his handheld platforming journeys have become legendary. For those of you who have supported Wario's Game Boy Color escapades, his first Game Boy Advance caper will blow you away. With graphics that scream Super Nintendo, and a highly modified gameplay formula in place, the Wario Land series has successfully made the jump into the next generation of gaming – and you'd be a fool to miss it.

Similar to the previous installments, Wario's portfolio of attacks and moves relies on brute strength and his ability to sustain pain. Along with his famed charge maneuver, Wario can lift and toss objects, butt slam through rocks, and double jump off of an enemy's head. More impressive yet, Wario doesn't fear the opponents that guard the tombs. Rather than ducking out of the way, or clearing a path for himself, Wario uses enemy attacks to his advantage. His philosophy – no pain no gain. When Wario is bitten by a vampire, he'll transform into a bat, allowing him to fly to uncharted sections of a level. If a large creature squashes him, he can squeeze through narrow passages. Going to the extreme, he'll even light himself on fire to pass through a wooden object.

Much like the evolution between Super Mario Bros. 3 and Super Mario World, Wario Land 4's graphical qualities are astronomical – displaying Mode 7 effects, realistic weather conditions, and colorful texturing. Through roughly 20 stages, the goal of the game is to retrieve four relics, locate the key, and then get out before time expires. When the timer ticks away, the level will shake – much like the ending sequence in Super Metroid. If players unlock all of the riches, a handful of minigames (including baseball) await.

Four obscure bosses protect the treasures buried within the Golden Pyramid

Nintendo's take on Pleasantville? Or a fine example of the GBA's graphical prowess?



Bloat to float. All throughout this quest, Wario must endure enemy attacks to obtain new powers

Within 20 stages, tons of secret areas, minigames, and wonderful prizes await

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 19

SEARCH! CREATE! DESTROY!

Now, the year's biggest movie comes to the year's smallest console. Introducing THREE exciting new Jurassic Park III games for the Game Boy Advance.

Search for missing dinosaur DNA and create new dinosaurs

- 2 fun gameplay modes combining intense action and puzzle shooting
- Use dinosaur abilities to find new levels and uncover paths
- Over 12 levels and 10 species of dinosaurs

JULY 2001

Create and manage your own personalized Jurassic Park

- Breed 140 species of dinosaurs to exhibit in your customized Jurassic Park
- Trade DNA with your friends to complete your dinosaur collection
- Manage everything from the admission price to the stores

SEPTEMBER 2001

Destroy traps and barricades and run from dinosaurs to escape from Jurassic Park Island

- Outmaneuver 8 species of dinosaurs with unique AI and abilities
- Find, use and combine over 25 weapons and items to help you survive
- Fast-paced motorcycle action with a pack of hungry raptors on your tail

NOVEMBER 2001

GAME BOY ADVANCE

A Note to Parents: The Jurassic Park films are rated PG-13. Consult www.filmratings.com for further information.

PLAYSTATION 2

ESPN WINTER X GAMES SNOWBOARDING 2002

LIVE FROM PLANET X

What's so mysterious about the letter X, anyway? While it's no surprise that many of Konami's ESPN titles have fallen off the face of the PlayStation 2, the X factor is exactly what may make this sequel stand out something fierce. What's in a letter, then? New features and an improved approach.

Snowboarding 2002 is faster on the slopes, but that's not all. Rails are kinked out and allow for 360-degree rotations and spitting sparks. Worry not about getting burned, because the new Butter move (similar to skateboarding's manual) will soothe your soul and pave the way for combos – now done by stringing together moves in a set amount of time.

Creating your own boarder to go along with the 15 pre riders is still the core of the game. Only now, you must compete your way out of your hometown of Podunk Mt. en route to earning a spot in the Winter X Games. The copy we played was still early, but we're hoping that last year's Lounge features remain, its movie shoots and other options would surely combine with the above to make for one of the deepest snowboarding titles ever. We already know that upgrading equipment and buying tricks are in the mix, as are 20 international locations. We can also say that ESPN Snowboarding 2002 is on the right track to claim the pond's thills in the name of the letter X.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 19

PLAYSTATION

TWISTED METAL: SMALL BRAWL

LET'S GET SMALL

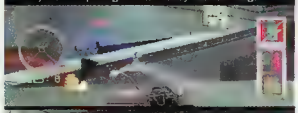
Given that Twisted Metal has made a name for itself as one of the darkest and most macabre franchises on the market, suffice it to say that our first reaction to the announcement of Twisted Metal: Small Brawl (then titled Twisted Metal: Kids) was something along the lines of "What the heck are they thinking?!" Okay, we might have used some more colorful language than that, but you get the idea.

However, upon further reflection, we are starting to see the motivation behind Twisted Metal: Small Brawl. Many of the older audience who ate up the earlier TM games have already jumped ship to the PS2 (and the awesome Twisted Metal: Black), so why not let the young 'uns enjoy a little car combat, minus the gruesome storylines and extreme violence?

The game takes place in an alternate plane within the Twisted Metal universe in which 20 of the most popular characters from the series are represented by cute little tykes that battle it out with R/C cars. These cars, of course, are based on the vehicles from the first four TM titles. These pint-sized piñatas of terror dish out destruction not with conventional weapons, but cartoon-inspired armaments like spit wads, paper airplanes, and bottle rockets. All in all, Incog promises there will be 20 of your favorite characters included. The two-level demo we recently received featured Axle, Crimson Fury, Mr. Grimm, Mr. Slam, Thumper, and Warthog.

The levels take a page from the (shudder!) Army Men playbook by turning the miniature toy combatants loose in real-world environments like a playground, meat locker, or mini-golf course. We'll admit that we're skeptical, but we do have enough faith in Incog to hold out hope that this one will overcome its somewhat cheesy premise.

R/C cars exploding? Looks like Jay has struck again



Features two-player split-screen action

Your weapons include spitwads, firecrackers, and bottle rockets

This kid is a punk rocker; you can tell by his anarchy T-shirt!

Yo don't be thankin' dis is straight up kidz stuff, da combat is off da heezy!

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** INCOG INC ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 27

REVIEWS

Our crack (or crackhead, we can never decide which) review team rates games in a number of categories to help you sort out the great from the stuff you hate. Each game is reviewed by at least two staff members, and you will find both their opinions on each review. To make things a little easier we have put together some definitions of what the numbers mean, what the reviewers are like (so you can find the reviewer most like yourself), what we look for in a game, and also a cheat sheet so the newbies can understand our advanced video game jargon. Read on and soon you will be talking FPS and FMV with the best of them.

THE SCORING SYSTEM

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Game Informer's rating system ranges from 0 to 10, and is similar to school grading. 7 is average, 9 and above is exemplary work, 5 and below is a failure. Aside from concept, entertainment, graphics, playability, sound, and replay value (all explained to the right), other factors that influence a game's final score are how much game you get for your money and how all the game's elements come together.

10 – Perfection. One of the best games of all time, if not THE best game of all time. This game has no flaws, and thus this rating is rarely given out.

9 – Worth owning. Fans of the genre should definitely enjoy this game, but even those who don't normally like this type of game may find themselves getting hooked.

8 – Worth playing. Still a great game, but arguably so. It may not be the best ever, but there's enough to keep your fingers wrapped around the controller for some time.

7 – Worth renting. Unless you're a fledgling gamer, you've probably seen everything this game has to offer before. Still, just checking it out won't ruin your weekend.

6 – Limited appeal. There are always a few people that will fall in love with a game of this caliber, but for the most part, those playing it will be yearning for something more.

5 & BELOW – Garbage. From this point down, it's just a matter of how much of a failure the game is. The lower the score, the more you're hating life for playing it.

CONCEPT
What new ideas the game brings to the table and how well old ideas are presented.

GRAPHICS
How good a game looks, taking into account any flaws such as bad collision or pop-up.

SOUND
Does the game's music and sound effects get you involved or do they make you resolve to always play with the volume down?

PLAYABILITY
Basically, the controller to human interface. The less you think about the hunk of plastic in your hands, the better the playability.

ENTERTAINMENT
Flat out, just how fun the game is to play. The most important factor in rating a game.

REPLAY VALUE
The longevity of the title.
- **High** – You'll still be popping this game in five years from now.
- **Moderately High** – Good for a long while, but the thrills won't last forever.
- **Moderate** – Good for a few months or a few times through.
- **Moderately Low** – After finishing it, there's not much reason to give it a second go.
- **Low** – You'll quit playing before you complete the game.

Content suitable for persons ages 3 and older

Content suitable for persons ages 6 and older

Content suitable for persons ages 13 and older

Content suitable for persons ages 17 and older

Content suitable only for adults

Product is awaiting final rating.

ANDY
Handle: The Game Homore **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** The Corner Market, Construction, 2GHz Computers **Dislikes:** Meatheads Who Post On Message Boards, Our Current Phone System, Xbox's Controller **Current Favorite Games:** Luigi's Mansion, Halo, Dead Or Alive 3, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

When Andy's not yelling at a game for "rippin' him off," he plays drums in Minneapolis indie rock band, Unbelievable Jolly Machine. A longtime fan of Metroid, Andy has been reviewing video games professionally since the days of the 8-bit NES. While a big sports fan in real life, Andy isn't the first to line up for sports titles, but is always willing to put in the extra hours to play a good RPG or strategy game.

REINER
Handle: The Raging Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Fighting, Action/Platform, Sports **Interests:** Star Wars, Comic Books, Transformers, Tony Hawk 3's Hidden Characters **Dislikes:** Terrorism **Current Favorite Games:** Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, Luigi's Mansion, Halo, Monster Rancher 3

Reiner considers himself the biggest Star Wars fan in the world. Along with his impressive collection of Star Wars action figures, he has seen the trilogy 532 times. A fan of all game types, role-playing games are his strong suit. In his six years as a professional gamer, Reiner has achieved the impossible. Penetrating the pixel boundary, he not only plays games, he's in one, and can be shot daily in the epic N64 release, Perfect Dark.

JAY
Handle: The Gonzo Gamer **Expertise:** Strategy, Puzzle, RPGs **Interests:** Dungeons & Dragons, Comic Books, Wrestling, UPS Trucks' White Tops **Dislikes:** Changing Pants, Yogurt Soda, No Age Limit On Nudity In YMCA Locker Rooms **Current Favorite Games:** Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies, Gitaroo Man, Saiyuki: Journey West

Jay lives in his mom's basement just like you. Adding further fuel to his archetypal nerd fire is his love for comic books, metal miniature painting, and twice weekly pencil-and-paper RPG sessions. In fact, he's such a D&D fanatic, he hates professional football simply because it interrupts his Sunday gaming schedule. Par for the course, his favorite games are often obscure ones. He is also one damn handsome man.

KRISTIAN
Handle: The Game Dawg **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, Sports **Interests:** Trivial Pursuit Genus V, Hot Wheels Cars, Sartek Cyborg 3D Gold Joystick **Dislikes:** His Roommate's Parents Using The House Like A Hotel, Downpayments, The Taliban, Bomberman As A Whole **Current Favorite Games:** Operation Flashpoint, Luigi's Mansion, Madden 2002

Kristian enjoys opening a can of whoop-ass on his buddies at the ping pong table, then running off to the driving range for a lesson in humility and anger management. The original text-driven Zork started Kristian on the gaming road; Ultima 6, NES Baseball, and Zelda made sure he stayed. Still an avid RPG fan, he can always find time to pound out a good sports game.

MATT
Handle: The Original Gamer **Expertise:** Racing, Puzzle, Action/Adventure **Interests:** Slayer, Bob Dylan, The Amazing Adventures Of Kavalier And Clay, Sushi Lunches **Dislikes:** Olives, Buddyhead.com Losing Their Free Server Space Due To The Grand Royal Shut Down, Terrorism **Current Favorite Games:** Super Monkey Ball, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X, Halo, Drakan II

While record collecting, watching reality television, and playing video games might sound like a state of retarded adolescence, Matt manages to scrap together an almost meaningful existence out of these activities. His encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture is either amazing or annoying, depending on how close your desk is to his. Less esoteric than his colleagues, Matt prefers traditional action and platform games.

JUSTIN
Handle: The Digital Deviant **Expertise:** Action/Platform, Fighting, RPGs **Interests:** The Simpsons Season One DVD, Jalepeño Chips, Yo-J, Rollins Band **Dislikes:** Prospective Renters In My Apartment, People Who Drive Dumb **Current Favorite Games:** Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, Dead Or Alive 3, Red Faction, Cool Games Everyone Else Played

Unlike most gaming jabronis, Justin knows there's life outside video vegetation. He doubles as wrestler Helmut Von Strauss in the Minnesota independent scene, where he violently bonds with other sweaty males – a practice that just gets blank stares when attempted on other GI reviewers. Though the youngest on staff, Justin's tastes are highly old-school, and he plays 16-bit classics as often as he plugs into the latest titles.

KATO
Handle: The Game Katana **Expertise:** Sports, Action/Adventure, Platformers **Interests:** Papa Murphy's, Sweet Home Alabama, OTNEMEM DVD **Dislikes:** Terrorists, Lowrider Toilets, Jury Duty During Deadline **Current Favorite Games:** Gitaroo Man, Resident Evil Code: Veronica X, Super Monkey Ball

When not buying copious amounts of records, Kato can be found exercising good taste, feeding the goats, and trying in vain to update his wardrobe into the 21st century. Like other young men of his generation, he quickly found out that the one true real world application of good grades was the free arcade tokens that were given out at as reward. With allegiance to none, he takes on every game with an equal eye.

NEWBIE CHEAT SHEET

For our newer readers, here is a glossary of terms and acronyms that commonly appear in the magazine. Video game veterans should move along (these aren't the droids you are looking for).

action – A term we use for games like Zone of the Enders and Gauntlet

adventure – A term we use for games like Myst and Escape From Monkey Island

AI – Artificial Intelligence. Usually used to refer to how well the computer reacts to a human opponent

board – A term we use for games like Jeopardy! and Mario Party

CG – Computer-Generated graphics

cowards – Terrorists

DC – Sega Dreamcast

E3 – Electronic Entertainment Expo. The world's largest convention for video games

fighting – A term we use for games like Street Fighter and Dead or Alive

FMV – Full Motion Video. Usually refers to an animated CG cutscene

FPS – Frames Per Second. How many animation frames happen in one second. Also used to denote First-Person Shooters like Doom, GoldenEye, & Unreal Tournament

framerate – The frames of animation used to create the illusion of movement.

frontend – A game's menus and options

GB – Game Boy

GBA – Game Boy Advance

GBC – Game Boy Color

GC – GameCube

isometric – Three-quarters top down view, like StarCraft or Red Alert 2

ISP – Internet Service Provider. The company that provides you with access to the Internet

jaggies – Graphical lines that are jagged when they should be straight

LAN – Local Area Network. Connecting computers or consoles together within a small space to allow communication between them. Provides fast, simultaneous gameplay

minigame – A small, simple game within a larger one

motion-capture – Using human models and infrared cameras to record movement for game animation. Also mo-cap

N64 – Nintendo 64

NES – Nintendo Entertainment System

platform – A term we use for games like Super Mario and Crash Bandicoot

pop-up – When onscreen objects, usually distant, suddenly appear

PS2 – Sony PlayStation 2

PS-X – Sony PlayStation

puzzle – A term we use for games like Tetris and Chu Chu Rocket

racing – A term we use for games like Gran Turismo and Mario Kart

RPG – Role-Playing Game. A game that involves character improvement through collecting and spending points. A term we use for games like Final Fantasy and Dragon Warrior

SG – Sega Genesis

shooter – A term we use for games like Mars Matrix and Gradius

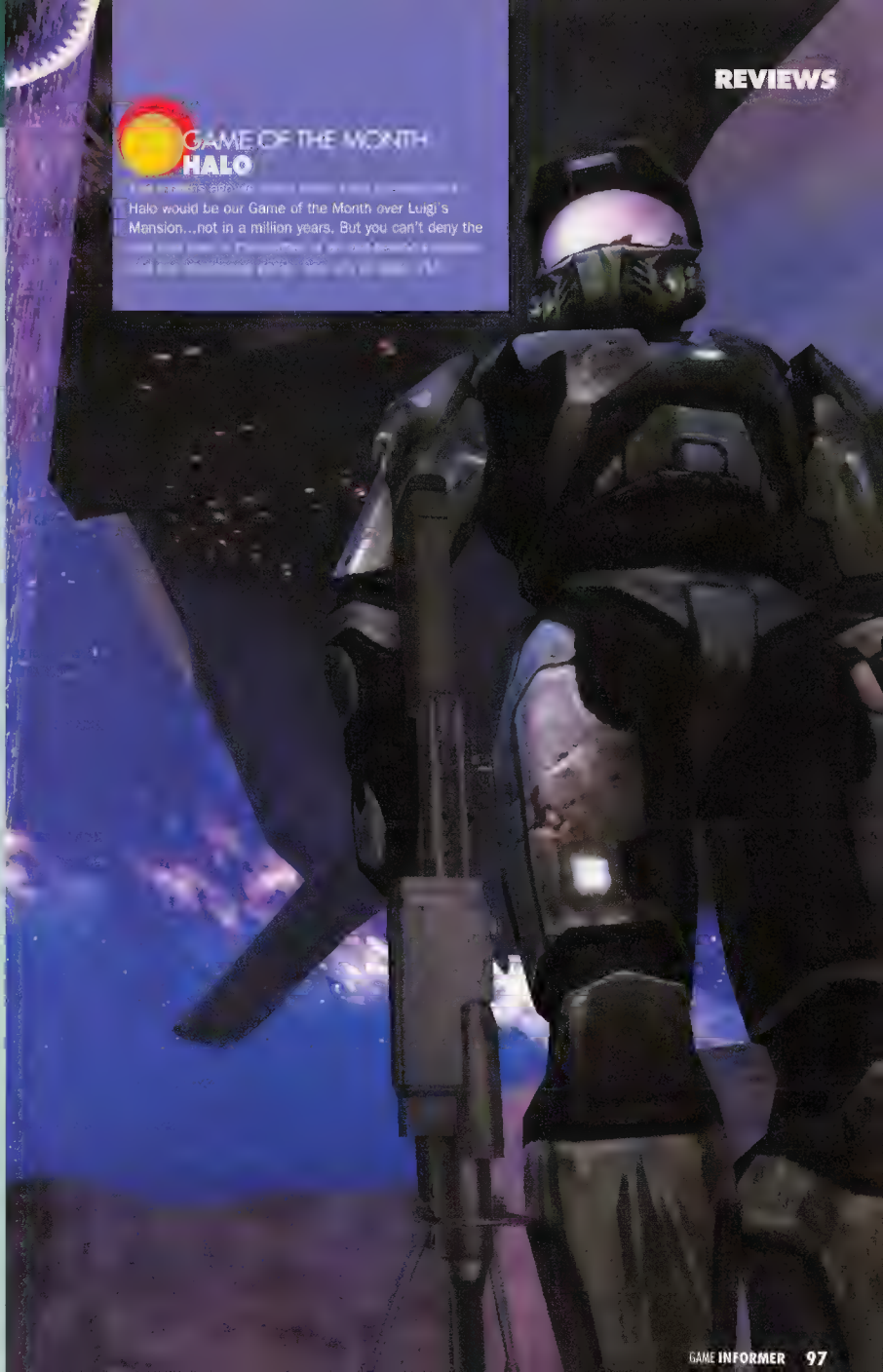
SNES – Super Nintendo Entertainment System

sports – A term we use for games like Madden NFL

SS – Sega Saturn

strategy – A term we use for games like Command & Conquer and Fallout Tactics

third-party – Something made for a console by a company other than the console manufacturer



GAME OF THE MONTH
HALO

Halo would be our Game of the Month over Luigi's Mansion...not in a million years. But you can't deny the

"... could have been the superhero answer to Tenchu. Instead, it wound up being Double Dragon with a cape and cowl."

PLAYSTATION 2

BATMAN: VENGEANCE

A CRIME WORTHY OF THE DARK DETECTIVE

Never before in my near three years of reviewing video games have I witnessed such a high-quality translation of cartoon to video game. Not only has Ubi Soft managed to perfectly model a 3D version of Batman: The Animated Series, all the added details make Batman: Vengeance feel like an extended episode of the cartoon. With a storyline written in collaboration with the Warner Bros. production house and character voice-overs done by the actual actors from the cartoon, no expense was spared to make the game a near parallel to the television show. Even the music, which jumps and shifts with the locales and action, is a well-crafted pleasure. Batman: Vengeance truly is a joy to watch and listen to.

Unfortunately, it is an atrocity to play. Certain elements, such as the first-person switch for using the Batgrapple and throwing Batarangs, work perfectly, but most everything else makes you want to chuck your Dual Shock in the trash. The camera will kill you more than Mr. Freeze, thanks to the plethora of platforming required. The switch to an almost 2D fighting game during battles spells frustration and death when there's more than one enemy present. The detection fields for cuffing and clobbering bad guys is so inconsistent you're often left wondering if your controller suddenly broke.

Saddest of all is that there's a multitude of stealth options and crafty gadgets for Batman to use, but the way levels are structured make these features practically useless. More often than not, the best solution is to simply go up to thugs and punch the hell out of them – or just run past them. Batman: Vengeance could have been the superhero answer to Tenchu. Instead, it wound up being Double Dragon with a cape and cowl.

Batman: Vengeance shines best when it's not actually being played. Here in the office, it often turned heads and drew gasps of pleasure. I, too, found myself playing on just to see what visual and audible treat awaited down the line. Even some of the new gameplay elements that appeared farther in – such as zipping through the streets of Gotham in the Batmobile – made me feel like there was still reason to keep playing despite my disgust. Thankfully, it's entirely feasible to finish the game in a night. My recommendation is to rent it for the weekend. Play it Friday and Saturday, then use Sunday as a day to cool down from all the anger Batman: Vengeance evokes. – **JAY**

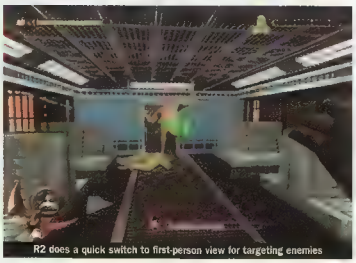

You'll get a chance to pilot the Batmobile and the Batplane

The explosive opening segment runs credits as it's played

Puzzles are present to prove you're the world's greatest detective

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 16


During battles, the game style switches to a fighter


R2 does a quick switch to first-person view for targeting enemies

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T ESRB

7

- **Concept:** A Batman game based on the animated series with the cartoon's crew fully supporting the product
- **Graphics:** A nice 3D rendition of the cartoon that could use more frames of animation
- **Sound:** All the voice-overs are done by the animated series actors, including Mark Hamill as the Joker
- **Playability:** The sole thing that tears this title down
- **Entertainment:** A game that's more fun to watch someone play, than to play yourself
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

This truly was an ambitious project on Ubi Soft's part. The world is re-created just like it is in the animated series, with dark shading and mile-high skylines. Many of the voice actors (including Mark Hamill) have also reprised their roles. Even the orchestrated soundtrack feels as though it were created for an episode. To say the very least, the setting is truly perfect. As for the gameplay? It looks like The Joker sabotaged this project. It's impossible to control. Buggy collision fields, horrible fighting controls, and sloppy camera movement translate into unmanageable gameplay. The story, which was penned in conjunction with the Warner Bros. team, jumps around way too much, leaving you clueless as to what is taking place. Being a huge Batman fan, I tried to overlook these discrepancies, but it nearly led to the smashing of my controller.

REINER – 7

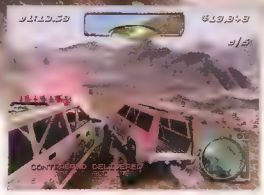
PlayStation®2

SMUGGLER'S RUN 2

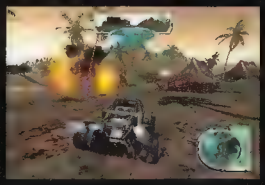
HOSTILE TERRITORY

The ultimate off-road driving adventure returns to the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system this fall. Work for an elite band of smugglers delivering contraband, escaping the authorities and attacking rivals. Make the drop, hit the nitro boost and get across the border before all hell breaks loose!

COMING
FALL 2001



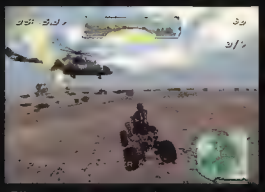
www.rockstargames.com/smugglersrun2



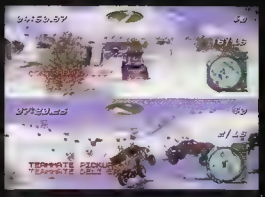
Deliver the goods through mine fields, avalanches and enemy crossfire!

Fully integrated plot increases the adrenaline and ups the stakes

Race anywhere across the world's most dangerous territories



All new mission types including helicopter drop offs!



Outrun and outwit your enemies head-to-head in split screen multiplayer mode!

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB — Violence

PLAYSTATION 2

MONSTER RANCHER 3

THE IRRESISTIBLE DIGITAL DRUG

"...makes the previous installments seem archaic in comparison."

I am a video game addict, and Monster Rancher is my game of choice. Even to this very day, nearly two years after the release of Monster Rancher 2, I still find myself investing at least 15 hours a week into this godforsaken game. To add insult to injury, I can honestly say that I haven't even scratched the surface on many of the secrets embedded in this game. To further complicate my life, the release of Monster Rancher 3 is upon us.

Rather than continuing the FIMBA/IMa battle, Monster Rancher 3 unfolds as a prequel. Since the game is set in the distant past, every gameplay component that revolves around technology has either been completely removed or altered to fit within the timeline. Without advanced sciences, extracting and combining monster DNA is theoretically impossible. Therefore it's no longer in the game. Along these same lines, putting a monster in cryo-freeze can't happen either. However, instead of completely extracting this aspect, Tecmo simply retailored its design to coincide with hibernation.

Alterations like these are spread all throughout this adventure. Certainly, the loss of crucial gameplay elements is somewhat disappointing, but as I quickly found out, there's always something new and exciting in its place. The most noteworthy addition, however, lies within the generation of monsters. With the PlayStation 2's ability to read the DVD format, new monsters can be found on every DVD movie and PlayStation 2 game. The great thing is, besides a couple of popular ones, hardly any of the monsters are from the previous games. For those of you who hunt for the rare beasts that can only be produced by one disc, the number of unique creatures Tecmo has incorporated will surprise you. Even if a monster isn't fully original, you may unearth one that features different characteristics, such as sunglasses, studded bracelets, or color alterations. Interestingly, as your loyal pet ages, it will grow three times within its life span – sometimes sporting characteristic changes.

Even if you do run into an old beast, you'll hardly recognize it. In an attempt to take the series to the next level, Tecmo reinvented the visual materials through cel-shaded animation. If you thought the monsters looked incredible in the previous two releases, the new designs in Monster Rancher 3 really put them to shame. It's almost laughable to look back and compare.

I can honestly say that I've never been so hooked on a series, and Monster Rancher 3 will probably be the death of me. Everything about this title makes the previous installments seem archaic in comparison. Addiction is inevitable, but really, what better way to waste away a life? – **REINER**


As your monster ages, it will grow in size

Before each attack, a brief letterbox clip of the aggressor is shown

To use disc chips, you'll now need to collect all four pieces

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER STRATEGY/FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO ■ **DEVELOPER** TECMO ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

The use of cel animation allowed Tecmo to create hundreds of colorful monsters

Instead of having to scroll through the list of moves, each attack is assigned to a face button

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E

9.25

- **Concept:** A prequel that boasts hundreds of new monsters, a refined combat engine, and an incredibly deep adventure mode
- **Graphics:** The beautiful cel-shaded animation enhances the creative monster designs
- **Sound:** Catchy RPG-like tracks with hilarious monster noises
- **Playability:** Along with any type of CD, you can now use DVDs to create monsters
- **Entertainment:** Thoroughly engrossing, highly addictive, and entertaining every second of the way
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

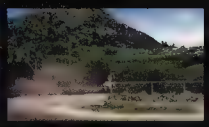
This game is deeper than ever. That statement for any other sequel wouldn't mean much. When in reference to Monster Rancher 3, though, it is like words handed down from the heavens. Some of the new features – like being able to download your digital picture onto a mask for your monster to wear – are neat but not exactly useful. Yet, most of the additions open up new strategies to ponder and more adventures to kill time with. Despite all this extra material, it is still thankfully easy for new players to jump right in, create a beast of their very own, and get to the arena within an hour. Considering that you could play the PS-X incarnations of Monster Rancher for months and barely scratch the surface, I would expect players of part three to be glued to their PS2s for the next year or so. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to enter Wolfy into a B class tournament.

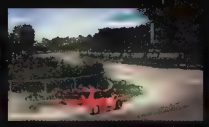
JAY – 9

PlayStation 2

TAHITI LOOKS A LOT DIFFERENT AT 225 MPH.

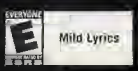
It's difficult to appreciate some of the greatest tourist destinations in the world when you're racing through them at 225 mph. But with over 30 different racecourses and cars from the world's top manufacturers which are created according to the exact specifications of their real-life counterparts, you'll feel like you could. Besides, when the competition starts battling with you for every inch of space on the track, you won't have time to see the sights. However, you can test your skills in the intense arcade mode or the simulation mode, where true car fanatics can supe-up their cars to no end. So don't worry about packing all your things, because if you're good, it'll be a short trip.





GRAN TURISMO 3 A-spec

THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE



www.scea.com

PLAYSTATION 2

ACE COMBAT 04: SHATTERED SKIES

PS2 TAKES IT UP THE AFT

"...a complete game package that has been meticulously constructed to draw you in like a missile to an after-burner."

After tearing it up in the danger zone last month with Titus' Top Gun, I was honestly a little apprehensive about delving into another PlayStation 2 flight-combat game. But just a few minutes into the first mission, my fears were forgotten and I was completely hooked.

The main thing Namco has gotten right with Ace Combat 04 is removing all the difficulty inherent in a straight sim, and instead, focusing the gameplay on mission structure. The game is so simple to pick up, a quick look at the control schematic should be enough for anyone to get started. Even the occasional aircraft-carrier landing is nothing to get nervous about – and if you want, you can just skip touching down entirely. This ease of play encourages daring maneuvers, convincing players that buzzing an enemy tower within inches is a reasonable way to avoid an incoming missile.

These uncomplicated controls allow you to jump right into the combat. Living up to the Ace Combat legacy, the battles in Ace Combat 04 are nothing short of breathtaking. The vast environments are overabundant in detail, the enemy aircraft and ground troops are rendered with great precision, and the action consistently maintains a smooth, fast pace. As you're flying, you hear the constant chatter of your wingmen, and much of what they say is actually useful information. Also nice is that, unlike many other combat games, your fellow troops are competent pilots in their own right, and you'll often find yourself competing with them to take out key facilities.

A majority of the enjoyment in Ace Combat 04 is obviously to be had in the skies, but don't be surprised when you find yourself involved in the between-battle portions. The mission structure is such that certain goals must be met to move on, but extra carnage is encouraged via bonus cash. With this money, players can buy new jets (20 in all) and armaments between flights. Although this kind of gadgetry upgrading is always intriguing, I was shocked to find myself even more impressed by the story. Illustrated with still-scenes and presumably narrated by your character, you learn of your quest to find and shoot down the ace fighter known as Yellow 13.

Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies really is a complete game package that has been meticulously constructed to draw you in like a missile to an afterburner. Like me, many of you probably have reservations about even renting this one. I recommend putting them aside until you've been in the cockpit for at least a little while. – **JAY**

Although mostly unnecessary, there is a Tutorial mode

Narrated still-scenes tell the game's story between battles

There are 20 jets and many armaments to purchase with your earned money

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO ■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 23

The replays allow you to see what you did right or, in this case, absolutely wrong

Read the top of this screen to see how the banter of fellow pilots can be jocular as well as useful

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** The Ace Combat series feels an updraft in graphics and gameplay
- **Graphics:** Pretty sweet, as long as you don't take too good a look at the ground
- **Sound:** The panicked radio banter not only intensifies the battles, it's actually informative
- **Playability:** So simple to pick up, the tutorial is hardly necessary
- **Entertainment:** Not only are the missions varied and the plane options plentiful, there's actually an interesting story being told between flights
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Around here, people fear the flight sim. "Ha!" I say. They don't know what they're missing. I too may have been in their ranks at one time, but then I played Top Gun. It chewed me up and spit me out like Jay with a can of Yogurt Soda. However, it pumped me up for Ace Combat 04, which is the superior aircraft simulator. While not as difficult as Top Gun, AC4 is a far more refined experience. With the similarities in combat and control, it could almost be a sequel to Titus' movie-license title. The plane models are unbelievably detailed, but the surface has a choppy, Mode-7 look about it. I was really into the backstory that followed the missions, telling the tale of a youngster who finds the pilot responsible for the death of his parents. I don't give a bogey's butt whether you think you like flight games or not. Ace Combat 04 is militarily delicious.

JUSTIN – 8.25

DARK CLOUD

PlayStation 2

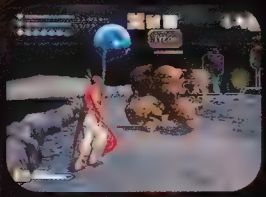
YOUR

BUILD!

2002

NOW

THE WORLD



Without warning, it came down from the sky. A dark, mysterious force unleashed by an evil spirit. The tranquil village of Norune was no match for such immense power. In the blink of an eye, destruction was complete. But amid the ruin, there is hope. A brave young warrior, Toan, armed with only a magical gem, faces the ultimate task of rebuilding the world. Venture with him deep underground to discover clues and gather vital elements of life—trees, rivers, houses and more—that will help restore civilization. Epic battles, macabre demons and daring rescues lie before you. As does the fate of the world. Will rubble be eternal? Or will it flourish once again?

www.scea.com

"If you enjoy listening to the broadcast, NHL 2002's dual commentary is the best I've ever heard in the game"

PLAYSTATION 2

NHL 2002

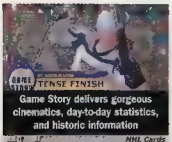
THE COOLEST GAME ON ICE

Last year, as a PlayStation 2 rookie, NHL's graphical prowess took center ice, dazzling hockey fans with its lifelike players, accurately modeled rinks, and hard-hitting cinematics. This year, both the gameplay and fantasy options play just as large a role as the graphics. The most notable addition, in my book anyway, is the implementation of goalie-adaptive AI. In NHL 2001, I could score on command with one of five different money shots. However, with the adaptive AI, the goalie will learn as the game progresses, and reacts differently to certain shot situations. You may blow a shot by Patrick Roy once, but if you try the same shot again, you'll see nothing but glove. Another nice addition that ups the difficulty a tad is variable puck control. Some players can snag a puck and dance across the ice like a figure skater, but those who have poor stick-handling skills will more than likely cough up the puck when the action gets intense.

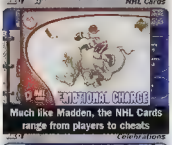
To give the gameplay more depth, a handful of player moves has been implemented. By holding down ✖, you'll perform a saucer pass over a defender's stick and/or body. Speaking of passing, players now do everything in their power to snag the puck, including reaching for it, kicking it up to their stick, and looking over their back. Thanks to improved collision fields, EA has incorporated a host of new one-timer animations, as well as multi-angled checks. If you tire of performing the same special maneuver over and over again, holding ▲ toggles the manual deke, which allows players to freely swivel the stick in hopes of making the goalie preemptively bite. With all these improvements, the gameplay is not only more enduring, it opens up countless strategies and techniques.

Equally as exciting, EA has reinserted the Career mode with rollover seasons and dispersal drafts. As incentive to keep playing, such feats as hat tricks, scoring first, and big hits will reward players with points that can be used to purchase packs of NHL Cards, ranging from players to cheats. The look of the game hasn't changed too terribly much, but more has been added to it. From the informative and action-packed Game Story breaks, to the now player-controlled celebrations, the repetition in animation and sequences will be far less than it was last year. If you enjoy listening to the broadcast, NHL 2002's dual commentary is the best I've ever heard in the game. New color-analyst Don Taylor is a riot and a half, and Jim Hughson is dead-on accurate as always.

The only complaint I have with the game is indeed minor. I can't stand the font used in the statistical menus. It seriously sucks! Other than that, I love this game...perhaps even more than my family. An absolute must for hockey fans!
REINER



Game Story delivers gorgeous cinematics, day-to-day statistics, and historic information

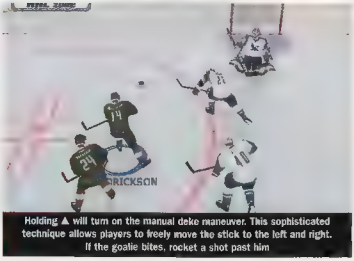


Much like Madden, the NHL Cards range from players to cheats


Set your celebrations, unlock more, then dance when the time is right

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA SPORTS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 25

Perform amazing feats to earn points that can be used to purchase NHL Cards


Holding ▲ will turn on the manual deke maneuver. This sophisticated technique allows players to freely move the stick to the left and right. If the goalie bites, rocket a shot past him

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E

9.5

- **Concept:** Drastically improved in every area
- **Graphics:** An unparalleled level of realism is found within the new rendered crowds and intense letterbox replays
- **Sound:** Jim Hughson and Don Taylor deliver the most informative (and wackiest) commentary around
- **Playability:** Perfection is achieved through the adaptive goalie AI and enhanced collision fields
- **Entertainment:** Incredibly deep. Looping seasons? NHL Cards? Need I say more?
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Like this year's version of Madden, EA has significantly improved a game that was already a hit in its first incarnation. 2002 accurately portrays the sport's relentless pace without the slowdown of 2001. Players turn and interact much better, kicking up lots of ice along the way. This includes the new puck controls and the inclusion of the Hero and Sniper player types. When NHL's smooth play is interrupted, it's only to highlight a breakaway or a particularly cool save. Speaking of which, goalies are absolutely on fire, kick saving and flying around like madmen! Just as important in making this a must-have title for sports fans are the 3D crowd close-ups and kick-ass commentary. The career and NHL card features are immediately noticeable bonuses, but you'll play it over and over again because of the changes on the ice, ice baby!

KATO – 9.5

You have .72 seconds to make a decision.

Total Control Pitching

Total Control Fielding

Total Control Base-Running

Total Control Batting

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PLAYSTATION 2

OKAGE: SHADOW KING

HAIL TO THE KING

Tim Burton would be proud of the artistic direction that Zener Works has taken with its RPG, Okage: Shadow King. From the exquisitely orchestrated soundtrack to the whimsical character designs (think *The Nightmare Before Christmas*), the production of this game is fantastic.

Okage is not all show, either. The story of the unfortunate boy Ali, whose shadow is taken over by the Evil King Stan, is quite entertaining and surprisingly funny. Definitely one of the game's strong points is that it gives you lots of options in the dialogue, so you really feel a part of the story. Plus, it gives you plenty of chances to choose smart-apple comments that add to the fun.

The gameplay itself is fairly classic RPG, with some minor twists to keep it interesting. While Okage is certainly a treat to look at, it does have some drawbacks, like lots of loads and town scenes that take longer than they should due to Okage's odd logic. It gets so bad at times, I was tempted to throw this game out the window of our building more than once, but the story kept me coming back. Be warned that Okage is pretty text-heavy – there's plenty of story – but if you're looking for an RPG off the beaten trail, it certainly delivers. - **ANDY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8

- **Concept:** Evil King takes control over small boy here; madness ensues
- **Graphics:** The cartoon look may turn off some, but I found it to be a nice twist and a breath of fresh air
- **Sound:** Any opening theme that features bagpipes gets the thumbs up from me
- **Playability:** RPG-heads may be disappointed at the depth, but there is enough here to keep the battles interesting
- **Entertainment:** It's slow, but the story is fantastic
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Okage can best be described as a story-intensive RPG. While a simplistic combat engine is in place, you'll spend most of your time digesting massive amounts of highly bizarre dialogue as you try to decipher the offbeat plot. If you like Tim Burton's claymation, you'll dig this release. It's quite clever.

REINER – 8

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** ZENER WORKS, INC. ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 2

PLAYSTATION 2

SPY HUNTER

A NEW AGE CLASSIC

When Midway announced that Spy Hunter was going to be updated and revisited, I could sense a disaster in the making. The original, while a classic, was really just an overhead shooter where you could ram into other vehicles, and I highly doubted that the experience could be refined and brought into 3D. Luckily for fans everywhere, my gut was way off. Midway and Paradigm Entertainment have pulled together one of the best remakes I've played in recent memory.

The key to this game's success is that each level is mission-based. From destroying contraband trucks to disabling bombs and missiles, each level is quite varied. To unlock the levels and defeat the game, you must complete a certain amount of missions, and since you must do it all in one run to successfully complete the level, there is a decent challenge here. While it could be argued that memorizing the locations is all it takes, there is enough fodder attacking you on the tracks to keep you busy, and there are plenty of secret passages to discover.

In total there are 14 missions, but even after you beat the game (which an experienced gamer can do in about eight hours) there are time trials to beat that unlock all kinds of secret goodies. There were a couple of minor things that bugged me about the game, like how unpredictable reverse was, or that restart wasn't the X button, but overall I enjoyed this game quite a bit. It's not rocket science, but it is a good time, and a solid product that will please old and new fans alike. - **ANDY**


Two players can enjoy straight racing, Chicken Hunter (shown above), or Globetrotter modes

The weapons van refills all ammo and repairs armor

Join a race in progress in Monte Carlo to disarm a bomb on the track

Swarm missiles rain death from below

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING/ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY ■ **DEVELOPER** PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 25

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** Blaze through tracks at high speeds, powerslide around turns, and blast missiles off the roof of your car
- **Graphics:** Though not amazing, the graphics are solid through and through
- **Sound:** Sufficiently rockin', but it would have been nice to have a few more tunes on here
- **Playability:** The car is just tight enough to make it easy and just loose enough to make it fun
- **Entertainment:** Who doesn't like driving games, much less ones with massive jumps and traffic begging to be destroyed?
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Let's give props where props are due and applaud Spy Hunter as the rare redux that gets almost everything right. The original Spy Hunter was the blueprint for many of the car combat games to follow, and it's great to finally get a chance to play it in 3D. Overall, Midway has achieved a level of quality I haven't seen in one of its titles for a long time. The graphics are very good, the framerate solid, and the action intense. The level goals, which require you to frequently backtrack and perfect each stage before moving on, are nicely structured. Also, there are a bevy of upgrades, some unlockable vehicles, and a ton of hidden shortcuts to be found. Most retro titles try to get by on nostalgia alone, but this is not the case here. Even if you weren't born when the original made a splash in the arcades, you'll still find Spy Hunter to be a first-rate car combat game.

MATT – 8.75

MAX PAYNE

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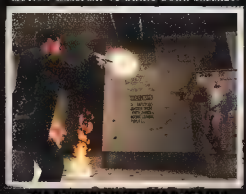
BULLET TIME™ LETS THE PLAYER USE SLOW MOTION GAMEPLAY TO BRING DOWN ENEMIES.



SELF ADJUSTING DIFFICULTY KEEPS YOU IN THE SWEET SPOT OF GAMEPLAY BLISS.

IGN.COM 9.3/10

"[MAX PAYNE] IS A TITLE YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST NOT MISS IF YOU'RE AN ACTION GAMER."- IGN

GAMESPOT.COM 9.2/10

"AN OUTSTANDING AND ORIGINAL ACTION GAME THAT'S NOT JUST DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER SHOOTERS TO DATE, BUT ALSO IN MANY WAYS SUPERIOR." - GAMESPOT

"HIGH INTENSITY, TWO-FISTED GUNPLAY WITH HONG KONG-STYLE CINEMATOGRAPHY, COMPLETE WITH PLAYABLE SLO-MO AND BULLET-TIME. THIS GAME JUST ROCKS."- NEXT GEN

AVAILABLE ON

PC

PlayStation.2

DEVELOPED BY

PRODUCED BY

PUBLISHED BY

PUBLISHED BY

PLAYSTATION 2

FORMULA ONE 2001

IF YOU'RE INTO THAT SORT OF THING...

Formula One is to Europe what NASCAR is to America. Like most cross-continental sports, however, what trips the triggers of the masses in one geographical locale draws shrugs of the shoulders from those across the sea. This scratching-of-the-head indifference is what awaits Sony's Formula One 2001 when it arrives in the States.

To be clear, though, it's not due to the game being poor. Effectively the Gran Turismo of the F1 video-game scene, Formula One 2001 has all the licensed tracks, cars, and drivers a fan could ask for wrapped around a deep and unbelievably realistic gameplay core. Unfortunately, it is this dedication to authenticism that will turn off most in the US.

Unless you possess a deep knowledge of F1 lore, and are willing to funnel this understanding into hours upon hours of training yourself to drive on the PlayStation 2, it's highly unlikely you'll be able to finish a race without being lapped twice by the competition. Do you harbor the requisite dedication? If so, then Formula One 2001 is the title you've been seeking your entire life, and is likely the only racing game you need in your library. – **JAY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** The official game for Formula One fanatics
- **Graphics:** Incredible detail in all aspects. From car models to weather effects, everything has been meticulously designed.
- **Sound:** As whiny as the real thing
- **Playability:** The most demanding driving game you can own
- **Entertainment:** Not for the casual gamer, nor the F1 hobbyist, this game is quite capable of reducing a hardcore racing fan to tears
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Already burned through Gran Turismo 3? I suggest you step up to this challenge. F1's high speeds and hairpin turns are twistier than saying Giancarlo Fisichella five times fast. The cars are amazing, starting with your driver's head being pulled by the G-forces and screaming wind. This is THE F1 game to own, and deserves a good look by all racing fans.

KATO – 8.5

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT EUROPE ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 2

PLAYSTATION 2

KINETICA

RACING IN NEW DIRECTIONS

In 1995, Wipeout opened a new path for the racing genre, with futuristic track designs and an unprecedented sense of speed. Of course, a new path can quickly become a rut, and gamers everywhere soon grew tired of the series of Wipeout sequels and the scores of games that sought to imitate the innovator.

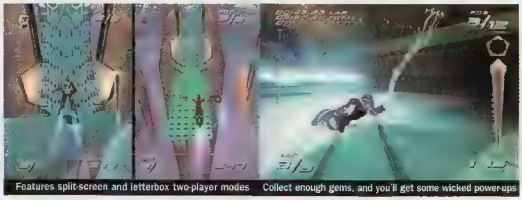
Kinetica displays many similarities to Wipeout, but don't write it off as a mere carbon copy. Instead of space-age crotch rockets, the game features characters who wear cybernetic vehicle suits. Each limb is attached to one wheel, giving your racer acrobatic abilities that a normal vehicle could never match. Throughout your races, you'll be able to pull off an assortment of trick combos. The tricks aren't just a gimmick, either. You'll actually need to master them to win races because every combo rewards you with more turbo boost, which is a vital tool for success. Another cool feature is the Siphon Boost function, which lets you store the energy from boost strips instead of using them by pressing L3. It's a small innovation, but an ingenious one nonetheless.

Kinetica stands out as a graphically impressive, inventive racing title that is somewhat diminished by slightly erratic control and a lack of depth. Still, it's nice to see people trying new things within a genre in dire need of new blood. – **MATT**

Bust tricks for extra turbo boost

The Siphon Boost allows you to save boost strips for later

This dive didn't score well with the East German judge



Features split-screen and letterbox two-player modes

Collect enough gems, and you'll get some wicked power-ups

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 16

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB

8

- **Concept:** Updates the Wipeout formula by adding humanoid vehicles with acrobatic abilities
- **Graphics:** The track designs are breathtaking, although they're easy to miss due to the blindingly fast framerate
- **Sound:** The techno soundtrack would have been cutting edge in 1993
- **Playability:** It's a solid feeling racer, but the tricks and the powersliding mechanics could use some tweaking
- **Entertainment:** It's definitely different, and for the most part, a good time
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Without a lot of modes, racing games are forced to rely on gameplay to survive. This is usually a death sentence. Kinetica, however, has more than enough racing thrills to hold your interest for quite a while. There's a bare minimum of options – with just season, practice, single race, and multiplayer to choose from – as well as a small list of levels, but just about everything else in Kinetica is done the way a next-gen racer should be. I was especially fond of the trick moves and multi-tiered tracks. Combos get you speed boosts, and just look cool. While not quite as blazingly fast as Extreme G3, Kinetica gave me many moments to do my best Keanu Reeves impression and utter a dazed "Whoa..." If you buy this game, you're going to play it and you're going to like it. It's the best of this racing sub-genre right now.

JUSTIN – 8.25

DAVE MIRRA 2 freestyle bmx CONTEST

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PLAYSTATION 2

CASPER: SPIRIT DIMENSIONS

HARDLY HARVEY'S HALLMARK

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.25

Casper isn't the hottest licensed property on the block, but TDK did put out a surprisingly good little handheld with Casper's sister Harvey Comics star, Wendy the Witch. Like Wendy, which utilized a nice little gravity reversing gimmick to great effect, Casper attempts to distinguish itself from run-of-the-mill platformers by putting your hero in the air and allowing the player to navigate the large levels via a dual analog control scheme.

Basically, the scheme is similar to that used in many first-person shooters for the PlayStation. The right analog functions as your forward/backward and left/right strafe. With the left, you adjust the direction in which you are headed. This system has proved pretty effective in first-person games, but it's a little more problematic when you're flying around expansive levels collecting coins and fighting enemies. Constantly having to back up and adjust your angle on approach just to grab a few errant jewels grows a little tiresome after a while. Also, with no lock-on targeting, battling flying enemies can be quite a chore as well. Now, this is something that would seem a gaming veteran from accomplishing the simple level goals, but the young audience that this product is aimed at will find the odd control dynamic to be unduly frustrating. – **MATT**

- **Concept:** Like every other platformer you've ever played, except you can fly
- **Graphics:** Reasonably good, but the levels aren't very detailed
- **Sound:** Extremely good; the minor key orchestral score brings to mind the movies of Tim Burton
- **Playability:** Although the dual analog scheme is intriguing, it may be too difficult for kids
- **Entertainment:** The repetitive level goals will turn off older players, but there are worse platformers out there
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

If all next-gen kid's games will be this cool, maybe hitting puberty isn't all it's cracked up to be. A lot of work was put into Casper to keep it from being just another licensed game. It almost makes me forgive TDK for Shrek GBC. Um, maybe it's not that good, but I was still pleasantly surprised with this platformer/shooter amalgam.

JUSTIN – 7.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** TDK MEDIACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** LUCKY CHICKEN GAMES ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 24

PLAYSTATION 2

EXTREME G3

REARRANGE YOUR EXTREMITIES

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8

Series like this and Wipeout took some time off, planning a resurgence on the next-gen platforms. In my opinion, this was time well spent. While there is nothing new in terms of gameplay or options, you play Extreme G3 for speed, and potential vomit points is where it scores big time. Once you upgrade your engine and lay on the turbo boost, the stunning scenery will whir by at a blinding rate (without pop-up, no less). Loops, corkscrews, and steep cliffs are all added into the mix as you call gravity a little pansy. And just so you don't think the package is too shallow, a season mode with a parts shop gives you something to do while you recover from the G forces.

As much fun as I had with Extreme G3, I have to give the slight nod to Kinetica in this issue's futuristic racer debate. Its tracks are better designed with more paths, and the trick aspect beats out EG3's primitive power-ups. Still, give Extreme G3 a try if you fancy racing whatsoever, or are looking for some forced bulimia. – **JUSTIN**

SECOND OPINION

Although it's not as innovative as Kinetica, Extreme G3 has everything that makes for a great racing game: insane speed, excellent control, and a wealth of upgrade options.

MATT – 8.5

- **Concept:** See how absolutely freaking fast you can make a PS2 racing game
- **Graphics:** Detailed environments, nice particles, and no pop-up add up to a happy Deviant
- **Sound:** You asked for slammin' techno beats? You got slammin' techno beats
- **Playability:** Very standard. Turbo boosts, power-ups, powerslides, and the good ol' gas button
- **Entertainment:** If you like going fast – and who doesn't? – you'll like playing this
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM ■ **DEVELOPER** ACCLAIM ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 25

PLAYSTATION 2

ARCTIC THUNDER

SNOWBLINDNESS SIMULATOR

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5

During times like these, I wish you could hear what you were reading. Why? Because then I could save you the trouble of reading an entire article, and sum up my review of Arctic Thunder with a single, slightly exasperated, "eh..."

Despite all the tracks, riders, power-ups, hidden routes, and bonus items to unlock, Arctic Thunder feels like the same not-quite-mediocre race over and over again. It may look like the action is intense, but in actuality the game is nothing but an exercise in pressing X at the right time. In fact, once you get your button pressing down, it's possible to finish in the middle of the pack without steering at all. Objects flying across the screen, or your vision being obscured by spraying snow for long periods, won't hinder your performance in the least. Within multiplayer, it is possible to find a little vitality in this title, but not enough to consider it worthwhile over other PlayStation 2 racers. – **JAY**

SECOND OPINION

A frozen rendition of Hydro Thunder with insane track designs, tons of hidden characters, and challenging arcade-styled races. It sounds great, yet the suspect framerate and obnoxious effects hold it back from being anything more than average at best.

REINER – 6.5

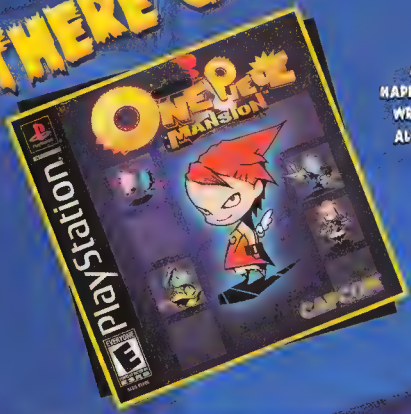
- **Concept:** Kart racing on motorized snow treads
- **Graphics:** Not so great, although you'll hardly have time to notice with all the crap flying across the screen
- **Sound:** Some things are better left unspoken
- **Playability:** Steering is more of a formality than a requirement
- **Entertainment:** Yet another example of a game designed for the arcade, and only for the arcade
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY ■ **DEVELOPER** INLAND PRODUCTIONS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 18

ONE PIECE MANSION

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

IT'S NOT EASY BEING THE LANDLORD OF THE ONE PIECE MANSION. IN THIS WACKY PUZZLE GAME IT'S YOUR JOB TO MAKE SURE LIFE RUNS SMOOTHLY. BUILD UP YOUR MANSION AS HIGH AS YOU CAN, RAISE THE RENT AND COLLECT MORE MONEY. BUT, IT'S ALSO UP TO YOU TO KEEP EVERYBODY HAPPY, HAPPY, HAPPY... OR ELSE THEY'LL MOVE AND SKIP OUT ON THEIR RENT. CAN A SUMO WRESTLER, NEWLYWED COUPLE, CAT LADY, STUDENT AND MORE REALLY GET ALONG? IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME SERIOUS SKILL TO KEEP THE PEACE AND MAKE SURE LIFE AT THE ONE PIECE MANSION REMAINS STRESS FREE!



Keep the Peace Among Your Tenants in Order to Make More Money and Add to Your Mansion

Wacky Gameplay that Will Leave You Frantic!

A Puzzle Game Full of Crazy Tenants!

CAPCOM

PLAYSTATION 2

NFL QB CLUB 2002

AIRING IT OUT

QB Club has been savaged in its previous incarnations, and rightly so. Acclaim hasn't taken no for an answer, and this time I'm glad. This is the best QBC yet, and that fact still only scratches the surface of what this franchise could do.

This series' comeback starts with the play calling. Offensive routes are more clearly defined than ever (even if the number of plays seems less), while picking your defense is a three-step process which helps you better understand players' assignments. This is important, because this title is tilted in favor of the offense. That's not to say that the variety of running and pass-catching animations won't be met with bone-crunching hits, however. Overall, QBC's plays are sometimes slow to develop, with the d-line coming off the snap a step late and not clearly executing their special moves. This is a problem that has plagued the series before, even if passing is smoother and shows more touch.

What remains is a game that is easy to get into and enjoy, despite the missing luxury or two. This fact helps make the QB Challenge – a better bonus than the Madden Cards – taste something like icing rather than a gimmick. – **KATO**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

- **Concept:** QB Club goes up against the big boys without a franchise mode. Again
- **Graphics:** Players have buffed up and gone the way of NFL 2K2. Helmets not only come off, but players put them back on again!
- **Sound:** Nothing exceptional, especially since Harlan & Maas are commentating
- **Playability:** Believe it or not, QBC's play-calling overhaul makes a huge difference
- **Entertainment:** It's not just the QB Challenge that makes this edition fun to play
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

The first thing I do when trying any new football game is to see how the AI reacts when I put in a field goal block unit for my first defensive series. Unfortunately, QBC 2002 was unable to circumvent my dizzying defensive arsenal of punt block attacks and field goal units. Aside from this, and the fact player numbers are inaccurately assigned, this is a fun little football game with a great minigame called Quarterback Challenge.

KRISTIAN – 7.25

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM MAX SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ACCLAIM STUDIOS AUSTIN ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 3

PLAYSTATION 2

BASS STRIKE

SLEEPING WITH THE FISHES?

This PlayStation 2 title is the latest in a series of games masterminded by the people at THQ and Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.) in an attempt to get you to cuddle up to their stinky fish of choice. Enjoying the outdoors or spending quality time with friends and family might do the trick, but this game comes up just short.

It's not that fishing as a sport isn't a title or two (or nine or ten) away from being the next big sports sub-genre, or that the game fails in any area – BASS Strike is solid. Overall, however, catching fish is less fun than in Sega Bass Fishing 2, even though managing the drag settings on your reel can be demanding. Getting to know my lures was enjoyable, but as unlockable bonuses, they weren't captivating, and neither were the characters I could win. You can, however, work your way up the tourney trail, but I think to your average PS2 owner, minigames or some other sideline event would be a welcome bonus. Would that be against B.A.S.S. rules? – **KATO**

SECOND OPINION

Not as high-action as Sega Bass Fishing, but much more realistic with lots of lures and rigs to choose from. I also liked the ability to split-screen when you troll. Armchair fishermen will definitely want to check this one out.

7.5 – ANDY

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7

- **Concept:** THQ reels in fishing aficionados with another chance to be the Bass Master
- **Graphics:** Good splashing effects, handsome fish, and room to roam
- **Sound:** Country techno! Dancefloor beats mix with ambient wildlife sounds
- **Playability:** Switching the drag settings on your reel is pretty cool
- **Entertainment:** Less pick-up-and-play friendly than Sega's Bass Fishing 2
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** PAI ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 2

PLAYSTATION 2

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD: WIDE OPEN

THE DEMOCRATS TAKE FLORIDA!

We, much like the national press, are not infallible. In point of fact, I am currently writing this article while clutching a knife and fork so as to better eat my rather large plate of crow. The detrimental bug I told you about in issue #101 is actually not the game's fault. After much trial and tribulation, it turns out I was victim of some strange cosmic event which isolated said problem to the two PS2s and two controllers I used while playing this game the first time. Bizarre? Yes. Something that could happen to you? Probably not.

In light of this new information, I have taken the game back through its paces to give you a better idea of the lowdown. This edition of Test Drive is certainly leagues better without the infamous bug, but the game itself still seems to suffer from an attack of mediocre gameplay syndrome. Most of the elements one would think might comprise a successful off-road release are present – such as a variety of vehicles and tracks – but I found the gameplay became a bit stale after the first few runs. If you like this style of racer and want a game that's easy to get in and out of, Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open might be right up your alley. – **KRISTIAN**

SECOND OPINION

Playing the game is fun, but there really isn't much challenge here. I thought the graphics were adequate, it's just that the experience didn't leave me longing for more. A pretty average racer, of which I will deduct a couple of points for being of the off-road variety.

ANDY – 6.5

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.25

- **Concept:** An off-road racer with a few old-school rides
- **Graphics:** Not ideally what one would like to see from a PS2 game
- **Sound:** Engines rev and things of that nature, but not much else
- **Playability:** If you have any gaming experience, you'll do fine
- **Entertainment:** Things could be much better in this realm
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** ANGEL STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 21

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GAMECUBE

LUIGI'S MANSION

GIVE IN TO YOUR FEARS

"If you can overlook the strange nature of this title, the gameplay is brilliant and up to par with Miyamoto's best."

Luigi's Mansion is a complete departure from the Mario formula. Instead of concentrating on platforming, the conceptual basis is that of an action/adventure, where players must solve puzzles to unearth keys that will open rooms within the haunted mansion. Of course, spirits of the families that once dwelled in this abode will do anything necessary to stop you from disrupting their peaceful afterlife. While some of these ghosts fall under the classic Mario design, most of the apparitions actually have a *Ghostbusters* feel to them. Speaking of which, it appears as though this film inspired most of the gameplay elements as well. Instead of a Proton-Pack, Luigi wears an augmented vacuum cleaner. As his little Hoover sucks away, the ghosts will get caught in a stream, and Luigi will have to fight to keep them connected. When the ghost tires, which is displayed through a hit point meter, it will be inhaled into his vacuum chamber.

If you can overlook the strange nature of this title, the gameplay is brilliant and up to par with Miyamoto's best. It's unlike anything you've played before, but it has the fun factor that you've come to expect from this legendary gaming figure. Unlike the Mario games, Luigi cannot run or jump. Combating ghosts is a complex process that is demanding of quick reflexes and a steady hand. Since ghosts can pop out of any object, you'll need to be on your toes at all times. The control allows just this. The left analog controls Luigi's movement. The right C stick changes which direction he looks. When a ghost is spotted, you won't be able to latch on until it exposes its heart. Most of the spectres fear illumination, and a quick jolt from the flashlight reveals their weak spot. Some of the ghosts require other methods that range from interaction with objects to the use of elements. When the heart is in view, you'll have but a brief second to latch onto them and begin the tug-o-war battle that spins and pulls Luigi every which way.

The vacuum can also be used on just about every object in the environment. It opens cabinets, sucks items off tables, and even pulls open curtains. The effects used in animating these actions, especially those surrounding cloth textures, are outstanding. For the nostalgic out there, Luigi occasionally hums the Mario theme song through his chattering teeth. Many of the spirits also partake in this merry melody. The premise is light-hearted and goofy, as opposed to the fear element of survival horror.

I didn't have the highest of expectations for this release, but Luigi's Mansion turned out to be the surprise hit of the year. Even though it is a departure from the Mario lineage, it still harbors the classic feel that we all know and love. – **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

E — ALL AGES — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

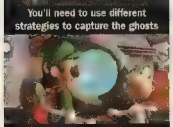
- **Concept:** Borrowing elements from *Ghostbusters*, Luigi must rid his haunted mansion of hundreds of apparitions
- **Graphics:** The artwork is beautiful, and the effects – especially the wind-blown cloth textures – are phenomenal
- **Sound:** Luigi's fright-filled voice is hysterical. I also got a kick out of the ghosts humming the Mario theme
- **Playability:** The puzzles are easy to solve, but you'll never tire of using a vacuum to catch ghosts
- **Entertainment:** Entirely unique and enjoyable from start to finish
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

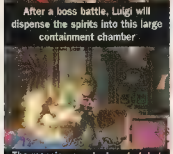
At one time I looked to Luigi's Mansion to be the defining game that would set the tone for the GameCube. But after taking the game through its paces I found it to be just one very well-done, entertaining game – not the groundbreaking title I was looking for. Luigi's strongest suit is obviously its great visuals that include some creative lighting and mist effects. The game itself is just a cute little adventure that has the main character using a vacuum cleaner which makes for an interesting game mechanic, but nothing revolutionary as far as I'm concerned. If you pick up a GameCube, Luigi's Mansion is pretty much a given. I was just hoping for more, because any gamer with some experience will blow through this title fairly quickly.

ANDY – 8.75

You'll need to use different strategies to capture the ghosts

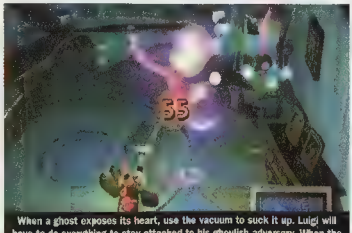


After a boss battle, Luigi will dispense the spirits into this large containment chamber



The mansion may be haunted, but it's loaded with treasures

STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18



When a ghost exposes its heart, use the vacuum to suck it up. Luigi will have to do everything to stay attached to his ghoulish adversary. When the heart meter ticks down to zero, the battle is over

The vacuum can suck up other objects besides ghosts. Here, Luigi latches to a beach ball, then shoots it at the spectre

GAMECUBE

SUPER MONKEY BALL

THIS MONKEY'S GONE TO HEAVEN

I jumped on Super Monkey Ball as soon as we received our GameCube from Japan, and after conquering the novice difficulty level in a matter of 15 minutes, I was amazed at how easy it had been to glide through the game. Boy, I really thought I was hot stuff, bragging to everyone that I'd beaten Super Monkey Ball as the credits rolled. What a fool I was.

Little did I know that this game was to fray my nerves and shatter my sanity like few ever have. Soon, I discovered there were two other difficulty levels, with 30 and 50 unique courses each, respectively. Also, there are three cool minigames to unlock – Monkey Billiards, Monkey Golf, and Monkey Bowling – as well as a Monkey Racing mode, and a few somewhat less-compelling Mario Party-style multiplayer contests. For a game that's been billed as a modest little action game, that's a hell of a lot of replay value.

The game is basically a twist on the old arcade/NES classic Marble Madness. Your monkey is in a hamster ball, and you must guide him through an endless series of platforms, hairpin turns, and past numerous obstacles to reach the goal. But, instead of directing your monkey, you tilt the playing field to manipulate his movement. It's a simple, yet brilliant, concept that harks back to the earlier days of video games, when all that mattered was pure gameplay. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** A next-gen synthesis of Marble Madness and Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble – with monkeys.
- **Graphics:** The visuals are vibrant and crisp, but this isn't pushing the GC to its limits.
- **Sound:** More of that same vaguely techno, vaguely jazzy Japanese arcade game music we've enjoyed for years.
- **Playability:** The control is dead on, and it needs to be, given how hard some of the courses are.
- **Entertainment:** If you have a high tolerance for frustration, this is a savagely addictive good time.
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

This game has really opened my eyes. I mean, why don't we put all our monkeys in plastic spheres? Super Monkey Ball's plethora of game options is great, yet I still wonder how it will be viewed when there's more than a handful of GameCube titles available. I say it's a fun launch game that becomes a forgotten one a year from now.

JAY – 7.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** AMUSEMENT VISION/SEGA ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18

GAMECUBE

WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM

N64 REVISITED

Creating a GameCube sequel to the longtime N64 classic, Wave Race, was a no-brainer for Nintendo. Especially since the extra horsepower that GameCube brings to the table enabled Nintendo to take the game to another level with transparent water effects, and bigger and more intense waves.

The main attraction to Blue Storm is the Circuit mode, where you have to race against seven other opponents. You must maneuver through a series of buoys, but most of the time the weather is your biggest obstacle. On a nice sunny day, the waves affect the course of your wave runner much less, but when the weather goes sour, not only will the rain and fog inhibit your vision, but the waves will pummel you and constantly knock you off course.

Experienced Wave Race players will have no problem picking this game up and doing well, but the game's difficulty has been upped a little with the harder-hitting waves. For people who have never had a chance to experience Wave Race, this is your opportunity to play the originator of the home jet-ski racing games.

My only strikes against the game are that the levels are eerily familiar to the Nintendo 64 game (a little originality would have been nice), and the graphics aren't quite as clean as many of the other games we've seen on GameCube. Overall though, Blue Storm is a great time that will have GameCube fans getting wet for a long time. – **ANDY**

One of the nice graphical effects is how the rain and water splash up against the screen

New flatland and air tricks are a nice addition

Get air and you can submerge your runner to get past obstacles

Four-player split-screen has no slowdown and all the buoys are easy to see

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** A wet-and-wild race where you must face off against other racers, and the environment, to take the gold
- **Graphics:** While not as clean-looking as some of the other GameCube titles, the weather and water effects are outstanding
- **Sound:** Lots of voice-overs and great ambient sounds
- **Playability:** Classic Wave Race control with more tricks added to the mix
- **Entertainment:** A challenging one-player Circuit mode and great four-player racing will keep you playing for months
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Blue Storm is either a testament to the original Wave Race's brilliance, or Nintendo didn't put much thought into this sequel. Other than the obvious graphical leap, this is the same game all over again. Even the tracks bear semblance, and the difficulty level specifically targets those who got wet and wild with the original N64 release. The changing weather conditions are a welcome addition, one that creates insane effects and hazardous waves, but I was really hoping for an overhaul in the play mechanics, not just the graphics. Sure, being able to see a coral reef beneath a wavering water texture is a visual you'll never tire of. However, if you've already played the N64 game, I have a feeling you'll be disappointed. I was. Blue Storm is a beautiful technology test, but not the sequel you've waited so eagerly for.

REINER – 7.75

PlayStation®2

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City Skater

Included! Unique "fingerboard" controller!

- Unique skateboarding/adventure game that pits you against mysterious alien creatures!
- In addition to the 10-stage Street Mode, practice tricks and combos in the Challenge Mode!
- Unlock different parts of the City using 8 wacky characters!
- Lay music tracks in the Ramp Mode, or challenge a friend in the Versus Mode!

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB Mild Violence

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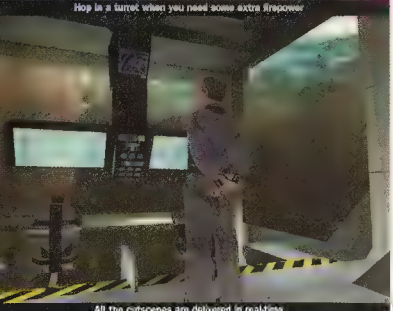
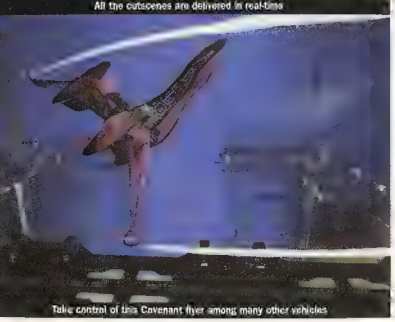


All the cutscenes are delivered in real-time



Take control of this Covenant flyer among many other vehicles

XBOX

HALO

THE XBOX ESSENTIAL

The hype on the street for Xbox has gone from good, to bad, to who knows what, but all along everyone looked to Halo as one of the premier titles, and a benchmark for how the system would be judged. Whenever my phone rang while I was reviewing Halo, the people on the other end would ask how good it was and then instantly ask the question of the day: "If it's just a first-person shooter, how different and revolutionary can it be?"

While I didn't get the chance to finish Halo's eight gigantic levels before deadline, from what I did see, Halo does offer a lot to make it one of the most impressive, if not THE most impressive, first-person shooter consoles have ever seen.

Playing the role of Master Sergeant, you are a super trooper who is seen as the savior in a war to uncover the horrible secrets of a mysterious ring-world known as Halo, and to crush mankind's sworn enemy, the Covenant. Since it's a war and not a "one man against the world" scenario, you find yourself fighting alongside your troops throughout the game. This is one of the amazing things about Halo, since the combat can become a frenzy of enemies coming from all sides and friendlies frantically blasting while trying to hold a position. If you think it sounds cool, wait till you see it in action with bullets and explosions going off everywhere.

Even better is that when you come across friendly troops, they will tell you (via voice-overs) how happy they are that you are there to save their butts, and then update you on the situation at hand. Plus, the troops will always work to take out the enemy, leaving you the opportunity to flank or use other strategies to destroy the vile Covenant.

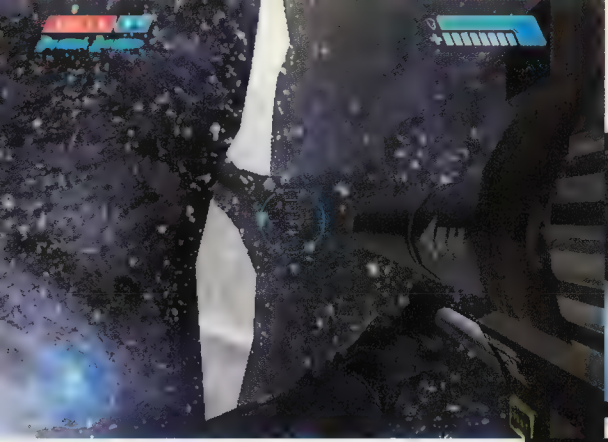
The gameplay itself is incredibly smooth, and is one of the instances where the Xbox controller really shines. As expected, there are lots of weapons to wield – from shotgun to sniper rifle to needler guns – both of the human and alien variety. But since the alien force is so strong, you'll quickly discover that grenades are one of your best friends and are critical for clearing the alien swarms that seem to pop up around every corner.

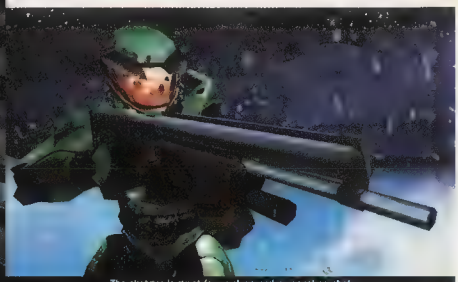
The player is also not limited to just standard first-person fare. There are different pieces of hardware you get along the way, including buggies (where you can drive or be the gunner), gun turrets, and stolen Covenant flyers.

While there really isn't enough space to go on about all the great features Halo has going for it, the most impressive thing to note is the fact that the whole adventure is seamless. When the Xbox hits the streets, every player will want to get their hands on a copy of Halo – it's really that outstanding. It may not be a system-seller to the masses, but the hardcore players will love its intense action. Sixteen-player LAN deathmatches and multiplayer co-op are icing on this already delicious cake. – **ANDY**

The lighting and particle effects explode on the screen like a Fourth Of July fireworks display

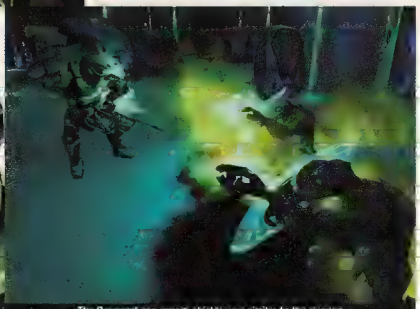
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION (16-PLAYER VIA LAN) ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** BUNGIE SOFTWARE
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 8





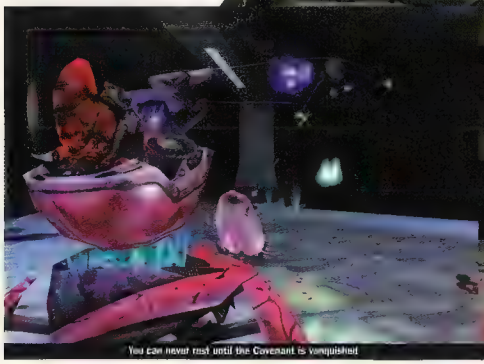
The shotgun is great for up-close and personal combat

"[Halo is] one of the most impressive, if not THE most impressive, first-person shooter consoles have ever seen."



The Covenant use energy shields very similar to the gungan

When the enemy gets close, toss them with your weapon



You can never rest until the Covenant is vanquished

Fight alongside your fellow compatriots

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M

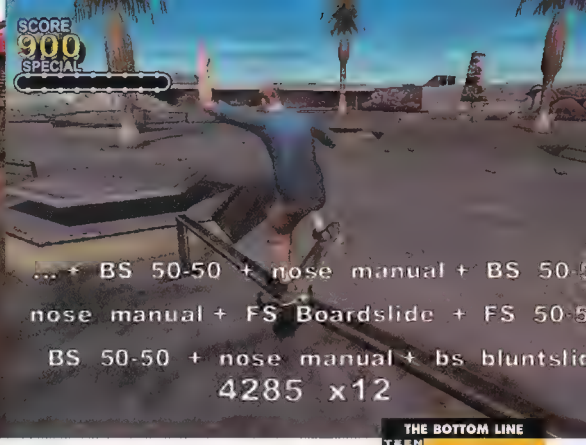
9.5

- **Concept:** As super trooper Master Sergeant you take the lead role in an intergalactic war
- **Graphics:** Fantastic environments and characters
- **Sound:** Literally hundreds of voice-overs that give the gamer a feeling of really being there
- **Playability:** Standard first-person shooter fare, but created for console play, so it's very easy to aim even without the benefit of a mouse
- **Entertainment:** If you have ever dreamed of being on the front lines, this is your chance
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

With one swift strike, Halo sets the standard for all console first-person shooters to follow. Its graphical prowess is truly unprecedented, lighting up the screen with a flurry of chaotic effects that can best be described as glorious. The sheer depth of gameplay, and the countless innovations within it, are equally impressive, granting players the freedom to do just about anything their hearts desire. Take control of a jeep, or if you're unsure of your steering, hop into the gunner's nest. While you don't have the ability to issue squad commands, you'll have a team at your side through most of the game. The sensation garnered is that of all-out war, almost coming across as a sequel to the *Starship Troopers* motion picture. Even the multiplayer, which supports up to 16 players on a LAN, is loaded to the hilt with possibilities. Halo is a dream come true and one of the most explosive games to ever hit gaming.

REINER – 9.5



"I originally thought this release was overkill, but Activision saved the best for last, and I loved every second of it."

XBOX

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2X

SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST

As the "X" so clearly indicates, there's more to this title than meets the eye. As necessary, all the environment textures have either been revamped or completely redesigned. If you look closely, you'll also see highly detailed rendered backdrops, single-bladed grass, flocks of seagulls, and extensive use of motion blurring. In addition to the impressive new coat of paint, 2X also includes all the original Tony Hawk 1 levels, and five brand-spanking new stages – all of which utilize Tony Hawk 2's gameplay. Oddly, the Tony 1 segment takes place after Tony 2 – which is a little out of order if you ask me. When you enter these classic levels, your attributes cross over, making the levels a breeze to complete. Yes, it is a nice bonus that allows you to create combo strings previously impossible, but it could have been incorporated in a more appropriate and rewarding way.

Now to the question of the hour: Can the Xbox controller handle Tony Hawk's Pro Skater? The feeling is quite awkward at first, but after a few hours, you'll come to terms with the button configuration. It's like breaking in a new pair of shoes. Reaching skating Zen is a tad more troubling, however. Since the face buttons are so close together, more mistakes occur, and instead of just feeling it, you'll need to concentrate on what buttons you press. Also the shoulder buttons only rotate you 180°, making for more difficult landings on vert tricks. To its benefit, though, I felt it was easier to control than the Dreamcast and Nintendo 64 versions. With the framerate running at 60 frames per second and no draw in the distance, the play is much smoother.

The gameplay is as precise as always, but the physics are slightly different, allowing skaters to catch a little more air than before. Another interesting tweak was made to the turning. When a skater is stopped, it's almost impossible to rotate without zooming in a direction. If you haven't played Tony 2, you won't notice a thing. However, if you know this game better than you care to admit, you may be annoyed by these subtle variations.

Since Microsoft's online component isn't ready yet, the only multiplayer options are split-screen and the LAN network, which supports up to eight Xbox units.

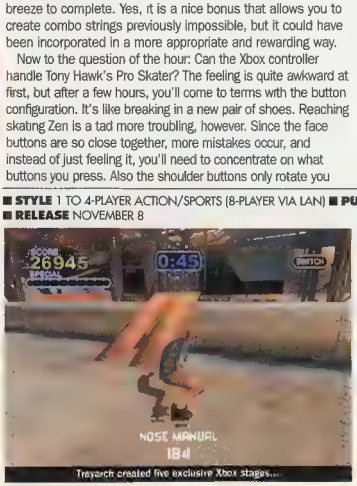
I originally thought this release was overkill, but Activision saved the best for last, and I loved every second of it. If you are the kind of gamer who plays through every inch of a game, tons of secrets (many exclusive to the Xbox version) are buried within. For diehard digital skaters, it's well worth revisiting, but I wouldn't run out and purchase an Xbox just for this release. – **REINER**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS (8-PLAYER VIA LAN) ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** TREYARCH/NEVERSOFT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 8

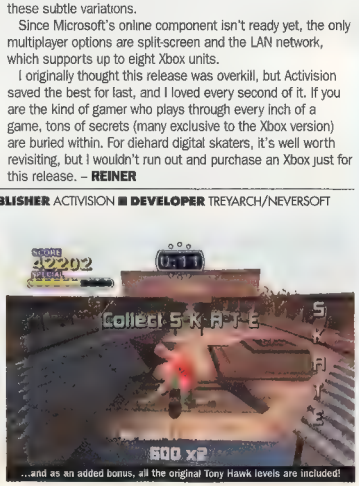
Graphical improvements have been made to all of the Tony 2 stages

The Park Editor features new objects and themes

Each time you complete the game you'll be rewarded with either a hidden character or cheat



Treyarch created five exclusive Xbox stages...



...and as an added bonus, all the original Tony Hawk levels are included!

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T ESRB

8.5

■ **Concept:** All of Tony Hawk 1 and 2, with five new stages

■ **Graphics:** The framerate is constant and background draw never occurs. All the environments also feature retooled textures and enhanced backdrops

■ **Sound:** Where is "The Ambassador of Kikyorasater"?

■ **Playability:** The Xbox controller lends itself nicely to the fast-paced play. The new stages specifically target longtime players

■ **Entertainment:** One of the few games with infinite depth. A must!

■ **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Okay, let's just take it as a given that I despise the Xbox controller, and then start from there. On the one hand, I love that Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2X has all of THPS 1 and 2 together with a few extra new levels for good measure. The thrill of getting to do manuals in the Warehouse and the experience of mastering the new levels is a rush. On the other hand, there just ain't a whole lot that's new here gameplay-wise, so the excitement is short-lived. Now, if this game came out for 20 bucks I would think it was the greatest thing since sliced bread. But it's not – it's a full-priced game. With Tony Hawk 3 out there, and the lack of new material in this game, I think this is at best a rental, or a play-it-at-your-friend's-house game. The game is worth a purchase if you have never played Tony Hawk 2, but if you've never played Tony Hawk 2 then you probably aren't buying an Xbox.

ANDY – 8

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9.5

XBOX

MADDEN NFL 2002

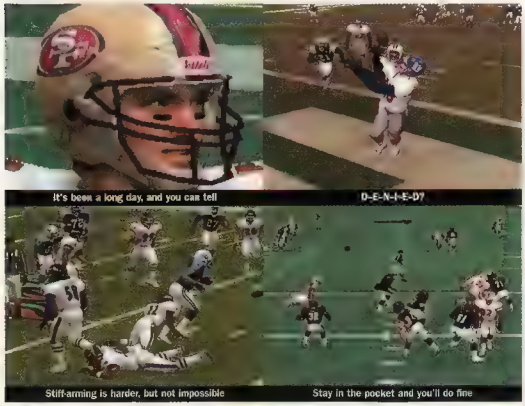
IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD

Pretend you're watching *Any Given Sunday*, and I'm coach Tony D'Amato while you're third-string QB Wille Beamen – oefore he's steamin'. You're flustered, missing throws. I tell you to forget the playbook and just play like you've always known how to play. You start winning games. This little scenario applies perfectly to the Xbox version of Madden. Forget about hating the controller and you'll light 'em up.

You'll curse those beady little bastards at first (the black and white buttons, that is), but everything's mapped more or less the same as the PS2. Therefore, if you don't think about the buttons or what pass routes are assigned to them, you're OK. I did hate that instead of pressing the L trigger for the slot receiver, you have to press the white button. The triggers aren't used to pass – which makes me think Microsoft made EA forget them just to justify the existence of the buttons in the first place!

Where's the love? It's in the players. Xbox allows scuffed helmets, increased shading in their faces, and dirtier uniforms. I was hoping the console's power would mean added stats, or fields that were more affected by weather, but no dice. This Madden doesn't better the PS2 edition, but it'd be a cryin' shame if you didn't pick it up on launch day.
– **KATO**

- **Concept:** Xbox needs a premier football game for its debut, so it calls Madden, not NFL Fever
- **Graphics:** Improvements have been made around the edges, but you may not notice
- **Sound:** How come Madden crowds always sound like a bunch of chanting soccer hooligans?
- **Playability:** Xbox's controller is inferior to PlayStation 2's, but the experience isn't far off
- **Entertainment:** It's a pretty straight port, including the cooler full of whoop-ass
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High



It's been a long day, and you can tell

D-E-N-I-E-D?

Stiff-arming is harder, but not impossible

Stay in the pocket and you'll do fine

SECOND OPINION

The power of Xbox has finally been realized. When I look back at the PlayStation 2 release of Madden, one crucial element is missing. It doesn't have scuffed helmets! For shame! In the Xbox version, the helmets get banged up and scraped throughout the course of a game. I feel the power, man. Jokes aside, the Xbox Madden is identical to the PlayStation 2 release. The only noticeable changes, besides the helmet scuffs, are a significant reduction in loading (which is a good thing), improved weather effects on jerseys, and realistic shading on the players' faces. The changes truly are minimal. Even on this newfound system, Madden remains the pigskin king. From the realism represented in the graphics and play mechanics, to the fantasy options and Madden challenges, a deeper, and more accurate game is unheard of.

REINER – 9.5

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** TIBURON STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14

XBOX

4X4 EVOLUTION 2

THE XBOX GOES MUDDIN'

If you're anything like me, you're looking for concrete reasons to sink your dollars into one of the next-gen consoles. Xbox has talked the talk, and now we finally get to see how it walks. 4x4 Evolution 2 seems like a no-brainer for a successful launch title. Not only are the developers improving upon a tried and true release that hit multiple systems, but they have a whole lot more latitude when it comes to processing power. This should add up to an incredible game that plays as well as it looks, right?

Well, kind of. The environments look incredible. I can't think of another game that showcased this kind of detail as I tore around the different courses. On the flip side, although the vehicle models are still the best in the biz, I was expecting more from an Xbox game. I couldn't see much, if any, improvement over the game's predecessor, and instead of more vehicles, there are significantly less (due to licensing issues with Ford). Couple this with fewer-than-expected new courses, plus minor control issues, and you've got a fun game that's definitely good, but should have been better.

KRISTIAN

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

- **Concept:** Off-road racing for all you motorheads out there
- **Graphics:** Very little pop-up for such expansive environments, and the beautiful vehicle models are still there
- **Sound:** Not much improvement here, but it was good to begin with
- **Playability:** The fact that it's easy to pick up and hard to put down is a big part of this game's draw
- **Entertainment:** This game is still a ton of fun, but there haven't been vast enhancements over the first offering
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

A more apt title for this game would have been 4x4 Evolution 1 & 2, because it includes all the tracks and tricks of the first game as well as plenty of new material to explore. A game with enough depth to keep you busy for months, 4x4 is so good it almost makes SUVs seem cool.

JAY – 8

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS ■ **DEVELOPER** TERMINAL REALITY ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13

PLAYSTATION

NBA SHOOTOUT 2002

FORMER CONTENDER FALLS FLATTER

Do that many people buy sports games? I mean, how can companies release obviously low-quality efforts year after year, and still have the audacity to crap out another one a dozen months later? NBA ShootOut is very much a shell of its former self. This once proud franchise, which had soared into the upper echelon of roundball games, now dwells consistently in the basement. The Bulls lost Jordan and Pippen before hitting the wall. What's 989's excuse?

Gameplay is nearly as choppy as the graphics. While ShootOut 2002 may have intuitive icon passing, decent stats/ratings, and great rebounding accuracy, every other aspect of basketball fundamentals is sorely lacking. Overabundant charging calls and botched ball fakes lead to mass frustration, and defense is a drag. Everything's a step off. Extras like Franchise are nowhere to be found, making it apparent that this game sat on the bench while PS2's ShootOut got all the attention.

I see NBA ShootOut 2002 as a veteran player, too proud to hang up its shoes and retire, forcing us to watch in agony as it limps down the court. It's rather sad, really – but not as sad as you'll be if you draft it into your game library. Even if I never played NBA 2K1 or NBA Live, I'd still know this game sucks. – **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE **4.75**

- **Concept:** Another baller who should hang up his shoes and retire, instead opts to play another season
- **Graphics:** Player models are improved, but I still can't believe we ever thought graphics like this were good
- **Sound:** Stylin' music and the same sound effects you hear in every b-ball game
- **Playability:** NBA players must be well-rounded; same goes for NBA video games. ShootOut just does too many things wrong
- **Entertainment:** If you have any appreciation for basketball, you should have bought a PS2 or Dreamcast long ago
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

In other countries, 989 would get its hand chopped off for releasing a game like this. Other than updated rosters, it's identical to ShootOut 2001, which in turn is a replica of ShootOut 2000. From now on, I'll always refer to 989 as "Thieves of Children's Money." Shameful!

REINER – 3

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** 989 SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** KILLER GAME ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 25

PLAYSTATION

DRAGON WARRIOR VII

I'M JUST WAITIN' ON A FIGHT

This is the game that sold well over four million copies in Japan? Talk about a culture gap. I'm not saying Dragon Warrior VII isn't an okay RPG, but how it captivated that many people vexes me to no end. It's slower than nearly every other RPG I've played, and no gameplay aspect sticks out as worthy of merit. Japanese gamers must eat up average games like American consumers buy cookie-cutter pop albums.

Dragon Warrior VII earns its name for its ability to drag on. It took a couple hours of solid gameplay before I even encountered a Slime to slice. Most of my prior time was spent in endless conversations and solving a few puzzles. Battling with the camera was combat in and of itself, though, with its snail's pace 360-degree movement. This has been used in quality games like Xenogears and Guardian's Crusade, but I just didn't dig it here. It distorts your sense of direction, and doesn't help the substandard graphics.

Once the ball gets rolling, DW VII has some interesting elements. The puzzles offer a ray of hope, and the admirably translated story will hook a few hardcore role-players. I applaud Enix for keeping all of the content intact, including references to God and a few adult themes.

If I wasn't playing this to review it, I would've turned off Dragon Warrior VII about an hour into it. I'm sorry to say, four million Japanese can be wrong. – **JUSTIN**

Here's what three hours of gameplay gets you

Your homeland is one solitary island

This gives new meaning to having your games saved

You'll do as much puzzle solving as fighting

■ **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** ENIX ■ **DEVELOPER** ENIX ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 1

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN **6.75**

- **Concept:** Try to rekindle role-playing gamers' love affair with this classic series
- **Graphics:** Almost competes with Wild Arms, and that's not saying much at all
- **Sound:** A nice standard soundtrack, which had me humming a few times
- **Playability:** Nothing you haven't done before in the NES predecessors
- **Entertainment:** Final Fantasy VII was a huge step for its respective series. Dragon Warrior VII is a tiny baby step
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

I'm not stuffed to the gills with Dragon Warrior history, but I do have a valid story to tell. It's not that I didn't like the game, it's just that I knew there were easier ways to have a good time. I remember cringing when Enix told me the first battle was three hours in. Something told me then, and something tells me now, that many gamers won't appreciate this fact like a fine, aged wine. Biding my time until that first encounter wasn't void of fun, however, what with the puzzles and the dialogue which certainly had its moments. I know that the title's first-person battles are a series staple, but I'm not sold. When you've got crude graphics anyway, why not at least show some spellcasting animations or victory celebrations? RPGers should love this for the look back that it is, but others may get lost in all the backtracking.

KATO – 7

PLAYSTATION

POWERPUFF GIRLS: CHEMICAL X-TRACTION

ANOTHER NAIL IN THE PLAYSTATION'S COFFIN

As the once-proud PlayStation enters the last days of its life, the vultures have already begun to circle in the form of cheaply-produced games that look to parlay known licenses into a few quick bucks at the expense of the remaining PS-X diehards. It's not a pretty sight, and neither is Powerpuff Girls: Chemical X-Traction – an arena fighter shallow enough to make Ooga Booga look like Final Fantasy Tactics.

The game allows you to play as Blossom, Buttercup, or Bubbles, and battle any one of several baddies from the popular show. The matches take place in rooms scattered about familiar locations in Townsville. In order to win, you must be in possession of the three bottles of Chemical X when the 100-second timer runs out. The fighting is confined to picking up various objects and throwing them at your opponent. You can also kick, but it doesn't work very well. That's it. It's like Mario Party with only one minigame, and a bad one at that. By the way, there are some Shockwave browser games on the Powerpuff Girls website that are better than this, and they're free. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

I've never seen the show, but I doubt it's about throwing furniture at people – or anything this unbelievably boring and stupid. You don't need a $30 frisbee, so don't buy this game.

KATO – 2

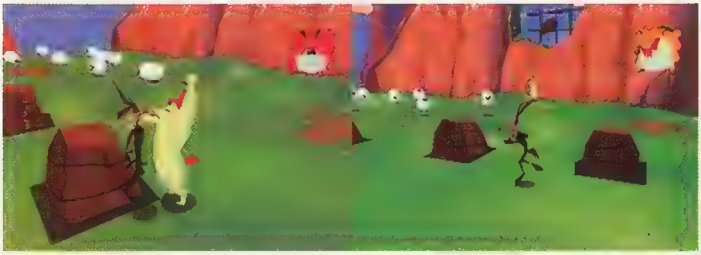
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB

1.5

- **Concept:** Characters from the popular animated series throw furniture at each other
- **Graphics:** The character models capture the look of the TV show, but the animation and graphics are horrible
- **Sound:** A cross between an Atari 2600 and a women's tennis match
- **Playability:** You can run, jump, and throw stuff, so I guess it works
- **Entertainment:** As dreary and tedious as it gets
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** BAM! ENTERTAINMENT ■ **DEVELOPER** VIS ENTERTAIMENT/ASYLUM ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 15



PLAYSTATION

SHEEP RAIDER

GRAPHICS VERSUS GAMEPLAY

The age-old debate rages on. Do graphics really matter? The engine this game runs on is similar to that of a first-generation PlayStation title. The texturing brings back memories of the Atari Jaguar, and the camera system requires constant user interaction. To say Sheep Raider looks nice is similar to saying Joan Rivers is a beautiful creature.

If you can overlook this aspect, which is difficult since you're staring at it the entire time, I'm sure you'll find the gameplay to be quite interesting and thoroughly entertaining. The tactics used for stealing Sam's sheep unfolds much like the gameplay in Lemmings. Using a handful of stealth maneuvers, you'll need to sneak up on a sheep and grab it when Sam isn't looking. After this, you'll need to lead the sheep to an exit. To accomplish this, however, you'll need to solve a number of uniquely styled puzzles that throw your conventional thinking through loops.

Hysterical and obscure, Sheep Raider should be a welcome addition to any puzzle fanatic's library. – **REINER**

SECOND OPINION

Graphical hitches aside, Sheep Raider does a great job of implementing a unique puzzle-solving dynamic into the conventional action/platform gameplay. Plus, it's funny as hell.

MATT – 7.75

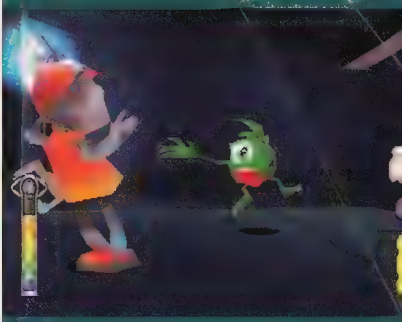
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB

7.25

- **Concept:** Ralph Wolf must try to steal Sam the Sheep Dog's flock
- **Graphics:** The animation is decent, but the texturing and camera movements are highly outdated
- **Sound:** All the classic Looney Tunes effects you'd expect
- **Playability:** Similar to Lemmings, but only with sheep
- **Entertainment:** It may not look like much, but it is fun, and continually tests your skills and wit
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES LYON HOUSE ■ **DEVELOPER** BLACK SHEEP ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 26



PLAYSTATION

MONSTERS, INC

FOR THE KIDS

Based on the Disney and Pixar movie of the same name, Monsters, Inc gives you the opportunity to control Sulley and Mike as they try to graduate from Scare Island and become full-time frighteners for Monsters, Inc.

The gameplay is obviously for the younger player, since it's rather simplistic, but for the adolescent set this 3D gaming experience is right on the mark. The goal of every level is to collect enough Primordial Ooze to terrorize the Nerves (that's what they call the robotic kids on Scare Island). To frighten the Nerves, you must bang on specific buttons to make your character on screen make scary faces, but since you have plenty of time to do it, it's not terribly difficult.

For the experienced 3D action/platform fan, Monsters, Inc is far too easy and repetitive; but for kids just getting into video games, it's a great place to start. So, I'll give it a 5 here in the review since I'm older than the target market, but I will say that if I was still 9 years old, I would have given it an 8. – **ANDY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB

5

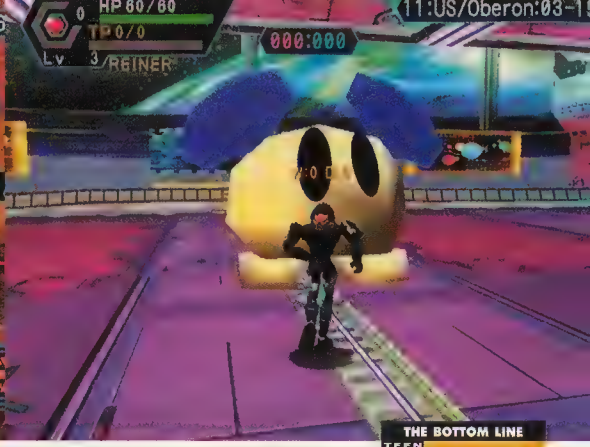
- **Concept:** A fun 3D action/platformer based off a big Disney movie that's...you know...for the kids
- **Graphics:** A 3D world in the vein of Spyro the Dragon, but with about half the polygons and not nearly as many effects
- **Sound:** Voice-overs help tell the tale and solid tunes keep the beat
- **Playability:** Collect Primordial Ooze to increase your Fright Meter so you scare Nerves (robotic children) to graduate from Scare Island
- **Entertainment:** For anyone over 10, this game is too simple, but it's great for younger players
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

The bad thing about Disney games is that they're all so similar, I often forget which game I'm playing. Aladdin's New Groove – I mean Monsters, Inc – covers familiar ground, but adds some mildly amusing button-mashing scare tactics to the mix. Also, a medal system means you will need to play each level through multiple times. It looks like butt, though.

MATT – 6.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA/DISNEY INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** A2M ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 30



THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T

8.75

DREAMCAST

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE VER. 2

STAYING CONNECTED

" Version 2 is essentially the same game with new material scattered along the outskirts."

Styled much like a PC expansion pack, the enlargement of Sega's persistent online world specifically targets the loyal fan base, but still delivers enough new material to appease the casual player. For those of you who have spent countless hours leveling up your Hunters, you'll have access to most of the additions right off the bat. If your character is at level 80 or higher, you can engage in the grueling Ultimate Difficulty setting. Be warned, though, even with an experienced four-character party, the slightest slip-up can result in a massacre.

The monsters, many of which you've never encountered before, are incredibly hostile and loaded to the hilt with hit points. To truly be successful in this mode, you'll need to pick away at it and spend time leveling up. If your character is already maxed out, Version 2 opens the doors, allowing players to reach level 200.

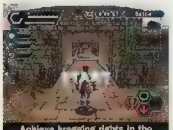
This may seem like a painstaking process, yet I welcomed the challenge with open arms. I think you'll all agree with me when I say that the original release was too easy. If you didn't have a friend power-leveling you, the introductory segments certainly posed a challenge. After a few hours, though, it was smooth sailing. If you and your team prevail within the Ultimate Difficulty setting, luxurious rewards await. The rare items in Version 2 pay off for the countless hours you invest, and bring forth reason to brag. How cool will your friends think you are if you have a Sega Master System-shaped MAG?

If you just can't get the hang of the ramped-up difficulty, you can always enter the Challenge mode – which basically tests your endurance in clearing zones. For those of you who insist that your Hunter is more powerful than your friend's, Sega has implemented a Battle mode that enables player-versus-player combat. Also, if you're waiting in the lobby for your teammates to log on, feel free to participate in Go Go Ball – a soccer-like minigame that supports up to 12 human-controlled players. This game is actually quite stupid, yet for some reason or another, I thoroughly enjoyed kicking the ball (which is shaped like a mouse or cat from Chu Chu Rocket) at other players.

As far as cosmetic alterations go, the animation has been subtly tweaked. Unfortunately, though, the untrained eye won't be able to pick out the changes. The only way to truly see them is if you have the two games up and running next to one another. More noticeable is the cut down on the clone problem, and each character class is now equipped with two additional outfits.

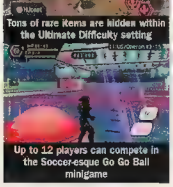
If you were expecting a complete redo, you'll be sorely disappointed. Version 2 is essentially the same game with new material scattered along the outskirts. – **REINER**

- **Concept:** An expanded version of the original that allows players to reach level 200 and test their skills in the Ultimate Difficulty setting
- **Graphics:** The refinements to the animation are hardly noticeable. However, each character class now has two additional outfits
- **Sound:** Identical – right down to the ambient sounds
- **Playability:** The online aspects are wonderful, yet the gameplay (primarily the enemy AI and targeting) remains lackluster
- **Entertainment:** New zones are needed, but the rare items give reason to continue the quest
- **Replay Value:** High



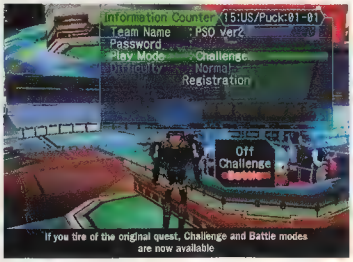
Achieve bragging rights in the player-versus-player battles

Tons of rare Rems are hidden within the Ultimate Difficulty setting

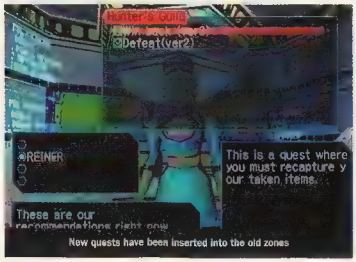


Up to 12 players can compete in the Soccer-esque Go Go Ball minigame

STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME **PUBLISHER** SEGA **DEVELOPER** SONIC TEAM **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 25



If you tire of the original quest, Challenge and Battle modes are now available



New quests have been inserted into the old zones

SECOND OPINION

This Phantasy Star Online update is a hard one to review, because unless you are a seasoned player, it's difficult to grasp what is different. Plus, the Dreamcast is on the outs, and not as many people will be online as you would like. If you're already a Phantasy Star Online fan, Version 2 is a no-brainer – it adds more levels for you to attain, a new difficulty, and a Battle mode that is great for proving who amongst your online friends is the PSO king. For the rest of the gaming populace, this just marks the passing of a great system, since waiting for Phantasy Star Online on GameCube may be a wiser choice.

ANDY – 8

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DREAMCAST

ALONE IN THE DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE

ANOTHER WALK IN THE DARK

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T ESRB **8**

Over a year ago, the Dreamcast was still a contender, and Infogrames was high on Alone in the Dark. Now that it's dead and the PlayStation edition has become the defining version by releasing first, I feel that this game will most likely become a victim of circumstance.

First off, the one thing that Darkworks has done on its own (to the title's detriment) is the fact that the FMV is actually WORSE than the gameplay graphics. In other words, they appear to have been taken directly from the PS-X edition! This shouldn't keep you from buying this game, though. Nor should it take away from your enjoying the flashlight's awesome lighting and shadow effects, or fully exploring Ed and Aline's two very different storylines. Unfortunately, when you go up against RE Code: Veronica armed with only a flashlight, you just aren't going to win the battle. That said, I do think you owe it to the game, and yourself, to see that it doesn't go down completely in vain. – **KATO**

SECOND OPINION

The CG cutscenes are lifted right out of the PS-X version, and the graphics are barely improved, resulting in a disappointing port of a really good game. Still worth a play, but nowhere near next-gen.

JUSTIN – 7.5

- **Concept:** The PlayStation Dark was first, but think of this as your second chance to own the game
- **Graphics:** Darkworks' use of the flashlight is a shining beacon for the genre
- **Sound:** Techno-esque soundtrack is surprisingly effective and well-timed
- **Playability:** I found the quick-turn button – whoopee!
- **Entertainment:** AtD's dual heroes aren't just a gimmick. Find out why
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** DARKWORKS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 26

DREAMCAST

BOMBERMAN ONLINE

BOMB-TASTIC SIMPLE FUN

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB **8.5**

Who would have thought an 8-bit fossil like Bomberman would still be smelling like a rose in 2001? If only we could measure the gallons of sweat and tears this series has generated amongst gamers. Now that you can play online, the drops aren't going to stop.

Bomberman and Internet go together like dogs and leg humping. With the simplistic nature of the levels and graphics, you won't have to pull your eyelashes out over lag, like you do with the Quakes and NFL 2K1s of the Dreamcast online library. Bomberman Online is also one of the few reasons to own a broadband adapter.

Despite the multiplayer functions, human adversaries are far from essential. The Bomb-A-Lympics give you a flurry of options and enough AI that you'll be screaming at the computer for hours on end, much to the guffaws of anyone within earshot. See, everybody wins! Bomberman Online is one of the most addictive things you can do that won't make various parts of your anatomy turn black and fall off. – **JUSTIN**

SECOND OPINION

Bomberman is, as many of you know, one of the most addictive and frustrating games ever invented. With all the different modes and levels, this edition is no exception. Furthermore, the online element is heaping tons of replay onto a game that's heavily steeped to begin with. A solid buy – if you like this sort of thing.

KRISTIAN – 7

- **Concept:** Toss explosives at bros in different area codes
- **Graphics:** Smooth CG and cel shading slightly enhance the same graphics we've seen on inferior systems
- **Sound:** Did Sega license tunes from Pizzicato Five, or is this just standard J-pop muzak?
- **Playability:** So many ways to throw bombs, all of which will make you frantic
- **Entertainment:** Online only serves to further improve one of the best multiplayer games around
- **Replay Value:** High

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** HUDSON SOFT ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 16

DREAMCAST

NFL 2K2

9 YARDS AND A CLOUD OF DUST

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E ESRB **9**

I can't help but feel the Sega's "all sports, all platforms" approach has slightly hurt NFL 2K2, cause you know Visual Concepts had other consoles on its mind. There are lots of reasons to feel good about this game, though, because the improvements do make a difference.

2K1's running game dispensed stiff arms and spins too easily. Now backs don't deliver special moves until they are engaged with a defender. This may sound like a downer, but it's as cool as can be. These contact enabled moves mean you see RBs earn every single yard through second and third efforts. This never-say-die attitude unleashes 2K2's added animations. Everyone's AI is also improved. Players now instinctively step over bodies on the ground instead of stupidly running in place. Likewise, runners turn themselves sideways to squeeze their way to daylight between offensive linemen. These aren't major changes, but if I told you the game felt faster and packed a helluva high-octane punch because of them, then you'd be crazy not to agree with me. This title is nothing but wild fun. – **KATO**

- **Concept:** The console returns full circle with the game that made it big, and everyone's happy for that
- **Graphics:** The usual visual tweaks are here, but the real changes lie in the running game
- **Sound:** The commentary has been synched better, although there are now *Survivor* [illegible] this year
- **Playability:** I think the new menu design has almost taken a step back
- **Entertainment:** More entertaining than ever even if a little short of perfection
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

I love how Dreamcast keeps surprising me with good sports product. Never mind that the Dreamcast is riding into the sunset – NFL 2K2 makes this system shine with its tight graphics and fluid animations. Although I thought the menu system sucked, this game takes advantage of every piece of power the DC can muster.

KRISTIAN – 8.25

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** VISUAL CONCEPTS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 18

PC

OPERATION FLASHPOINT: COLD WAR CRISIS

IMPRESSIVE...MOST IMPRESSIVE

"It's so exacting in detail, the Marines are showing interest in using it as part of their training programs."

There is absolutely nothing better than sitting down to play a game and knowing that you're about to lose all contact with your surroundings. Such was my experience with Operation Flashpoint. I've played my share of military first-person shooter titles – indeed, I would venture that I am somewhat of a veteran – and this is as good as I've seen from the genre.

Interestingly enough, play is not limited to the first-person perspective. At the touch of a key, you're able to switch from first- to third-person views. In some instances (namely when piloting a vehicle), this comes in quite handy. Having a larger field of vision, coupled with pinpoint movement control, gives the savvy gamer an invaluable tool for detail work, and the novice an instant point of reference for orientation or formation movement.

Of course, this would all be for nothing if the gameplay couldn't hold up under fire. I'm elated to tell you that I haven't had this much fun with an action/shooter of this ilk since I was painfully addicted to Counter-Strike. Although fundamentally different from its online cousin, Operation Flashpoint exhibits the same type of intense and exhilarating play we've all come to know and love from Counter-Strike.

Focused more around a realistic combat simulator, OpFlash (as the cool kids are calling it nowadays) forces the player to use brains as well as brawn – especially during campaign play. Be too aggressive and you'll get yourself killed. Too cautious and you'll let your squad down. Adapting your style to the situation is necessary if you want to finish your tour of duty in one piece.

Your time in-country begins as you assume control of a lowly NATO private on a small island near Europe. Things begin to go terribly awry as reports of Russian hostility on the island are confirmed through small skirmishes around various island towns. I'm sure you're thinking that the game is about going in with your force and knocking those commie bastards out of there. Not so, my friend. At least not for a while. Let's just say the Russians weren't a superpower for nothing. Get ready for the thrill of victory and the sting of defeat.

Apart from the fascinating Campaign Mode, the game also features an incredible multiplayer online component. It's so exacting in detail, the Marines are showing interest in using it as part of their training programs. Along with that (as if you needed more) are single missions, and a mission builder the likes of which has never been seen in a game of this caliber. Buy now, play often. – **KRISTIAN**

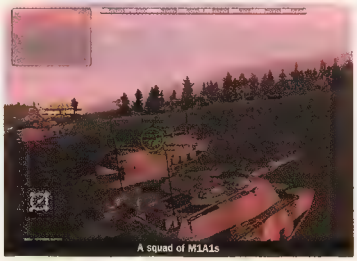
Here's what not to do when piloting a Cobra

The M113 is your friend – it takes bullets so you don't have to

Following your squad will be essential to your survival

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CODEMASTERS ■ **DEVELOPER** BOHEMIA INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 28

Aiming is a bit easier when you use your sight



A squad of M1A1s

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M ESRB

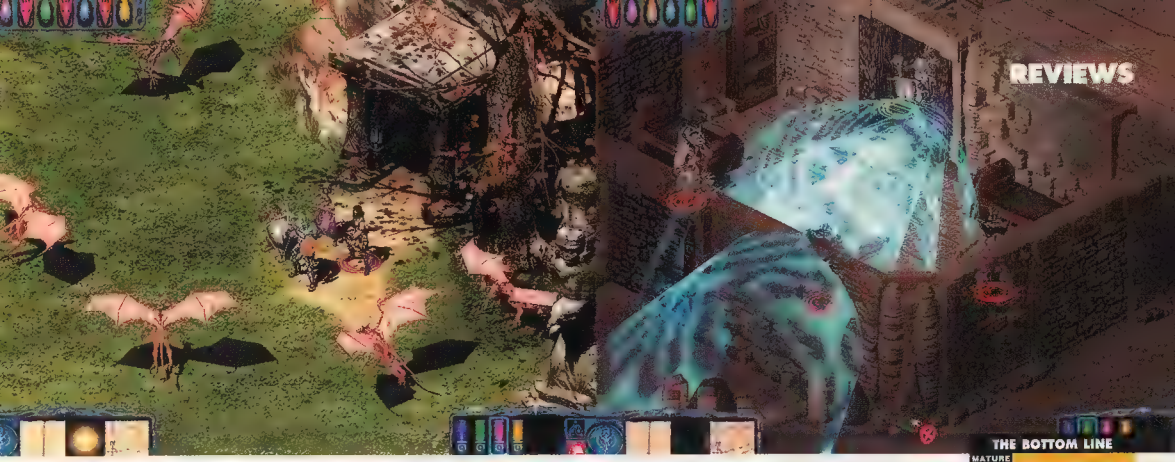
9.5

- **Concept:** An incredibly detailed military release including infantry, armor, and air-support experiences
- **Graphics:** Highly realistic graphics make for a lot of eye candy
- **Sound:** Superb directional effects, great ambient sounds, and a ample voice acting
- **Playability:** Piloting different vehicles can be tricky at first, but you should catch on without too much difficulty
- **Entertainment:** An exceptional combat sim with enough replay to make your head spin
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Operation Flashpoint does a superb job of delivering an immersive war experience, but in the end its goal of realism also becomes its weak point. For the sake of the story, the game has you riding in trucks and spending lots of time running around. At first I thought this was a nice touch, but my patience was short-lived. Also, the game lacks production quality in certain instances, like the cutscenes that are slow and poorly directed, or the various glitches that come up from time to time. Operation Flashpoint is easy to control and does deliver a war experience that is quite memorable, but I just couldn't get hooked. With some more polish I could have really fallen for this game, but as it stands, it doesn't have enough action to keep me sitting in front of the computer.

ANDY – 7.5



PC

POOL OF RADIANCE: RUINS OF MYTH DRANNOR

D&D FOR DUMMIES

"[Pool of Radiance] has essentially neutered the most exciting parts of 3rd Edition."

After innumerable delays and having passed through more hands than a freshman co-ed at a frat party, Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor has finally been released. The first game to use the streamlined 3rd Edition Dungeons & Dragons system, this was the title meant to bridge the rules gap between paper and polygons that Baldur's Gate never did. Officially, I have to admit that it's mission accomplished for Stormfront Studios in bringing the PC world up to date with the D&D realm. However, the way Stormfront has chosen to apply the new rules to gameplay has essentially neutered the most exciting parts of 3rd Edition.

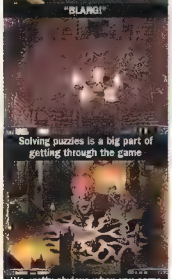
Rather than allow you to customize your characters by selecting abilities and distributing skill points as you would in the pencil-and-paper version, these important choices are made for you automatically during the character-creation process and as you level up. Other notable oversights, such as the absence of the gnome race, the druid and wizard class, and any prestige classes at all, make the game feel even more limiting. It's almost as if the goal was to dumb down the entire game so such options wouldn't confuse customers.

Exacerbating the "What took this game so long to come out?" feeling is an interface that was seemingly made to encourage errors. Combat actions are listed dangerously close together, and it takes nothing but a slight slip of the mouse to accidentally cast Charm Person on a zombie when you meant to use Magic Missile. The same is true on the battlefield, where you'll move when you meant to swing your axe, provoking undue attacks of opportunity. The most asinine thing in the control setup is having to press the space bar to declare the end of a character's turn. It's all too easy to press it twice, causing party members to be skipped in critical situations. Since there's no option to go back and redo actions, you're stuck with the unfair fate assigned you.

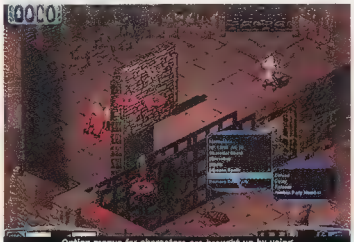
Despite all these flaws, I still like Ruins of Myth Drannor. There's definitely a mound of polish that will need to be applied to any future installments – and maybe even a patch or two to clear up current mistakes – but it's an admirable first effort. Once you get the hang of traversing around the problems, you're left with a moderately involving role-playing game of gargantuan proportions. It's not the kind of game that will keep you up late at night or steal away weeks of your life. It's more like the kind of game you'll play for an hour or so every day. – **JAY**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 6-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** STORMFRONT STUDIOS
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER '27

Solving puzzles is a big part of getting through the game



It's pretty obvious when you come to an important room



Option menus for characters are brought up by using the right mouse button

To give you an idea of the game's size, this is but a miniscule portion of the first dungeon

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** The first role-playing game using all the rules from 3rd Edition Dungeons & Dragons...almost
- **Graphics:** Similar to Baldur's Gate, but with sharper character models thanks to the game's slower pace
- **Sound:** Nothing extraordinary. Some alright music and a fair amount of voice-overs
- **Playability:** The interface could definitely use some work. It's all too easy to skip a turn or do the wrong thing
- **Entertainment:** Fun, yet leaves you wondering why it was delayed for so long
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Dungeons & Dragons fans are typically the least-forgiving gaming demographic when it comes to any kind of departure from their beloved pencil-and-paper pastime. I myself have played D&D the old-fashioned way and thoroughly enjoyed it, but my expertise ends with 2nd Edition. Luckily for me, playing this game with Jay has expanded my horizons to now encompass 3rd Edition rules. Pool of Radiance is the first game to fully utilize these parameters, but it ends up being what I would call an intermediate's D&D adventure. The battles are turn-based, and a lot of the new rules made it in. However, the inventory system reeks of Diablo (which is a system I would like to pee on), the pace of the game is painfully slow at times, and the targeting system is quirky at best. Add to this a lackluster character-generation system and you've got a game that casual fans will dig, but the faithful will abhor.

KRISTIAN – 7.5

PC

SHATTERED GALAXY

WE'RE PASSING THROUGH THE MAGNETIC FIELD

Rarely, if ever, does a massively multiplayer title release without need for a bit of gameplay maintenance. Although Shattered Galaxy is no exception, when compared with its contemporaries, the amount of upkeep seems miniscule. Considering that Shattered Galaxy marks one of the pioneering efforts to bring real-time strategy into this type of arena, the title is truly worthy of praise. Granted, the RTS genre doesn't lend itself to the type of overwhelming complexity that a role-playing game inherently accumulates, but what SG lacks in intricacy, it makes up for in unit development and character improvement.

I suppose this game could be billed as an RTS/RPG hybrid. You build a commander of sorts who serves as a vehicle to repair and upgrade your units when they're not in battle. When you feel your forces are at their strongest, you venture outside your capital to battle opposing factions as they try to take your territory. Not only will your commander level up through battle experience, but your individual units will as well. Although not an incredible feature, I found this to be one of the things I liked most about SG. Though the menu system can be awkward at times, and the tutorials need smoothing over, this is an excellent offering for a rookie release. **KRISTIAN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8

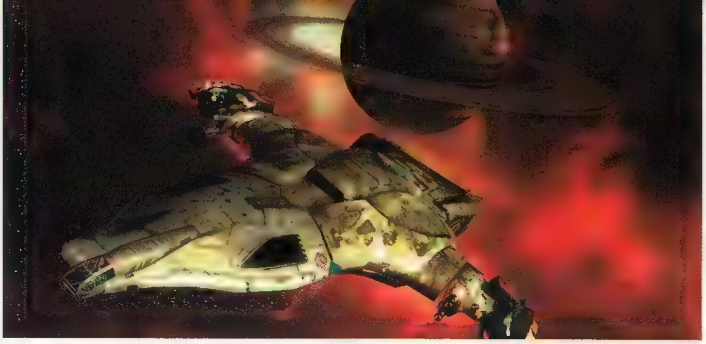
- **Concept:** One of the first jumps to the massively multiplayer arena for a real-time strategy title
- **Graphics:** Though nothing could be deemed as eye-popping, there's enough detail to keep things interesting
- **Sound:** Nice music; however, it would be an understatement to call the battle sounds lackluster
- **Playability:** Things seem to be easy to begin with, but with this game, the devil's in the details
- **Entertainment:** If you're an RTS junkie looking for your next conquest, here it is
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Being a massively multiplayer online game, the limitations put on players of Shattered Galaxy are understandable. Understandable, but not acceptable. After the thrill of fighting with legions of others wears off, all that's left is a somewhat simplistic real-time strategy game where you control a dozen units at most.

JAY – 7.5

■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** NEXON ■ **DEVELOPER** NEXON ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 24

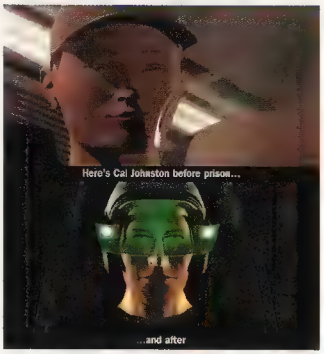


PC

INDEPENDENCE WAR 2: THE EDGE OF CHAOS

STAY ON TARGET...

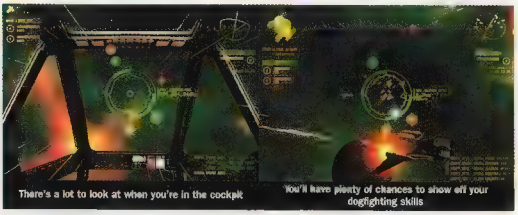
The first thing that must be mentioned is the sterling quality of this game's cutscenes. I have rarely seen their equal. Every sequence (the opening in particular) has been produced to near-cinematic quality. These snippets alone are worth the price of admission, but the best part comes when you enter the gameplay and don't feel let down. I tend to feel an underlying sense of anticipation to get from cutscene to cutscene when I play this type of release, but not so with Independence War 2. The gameplay easily matches the quality of the movies which support it.



Here's Cal Johnston before prison...

...and after

Upon delving into the gameplay, I found the interface left a bit to be desired, especially when it came to an intuitive menu system. Aside from that, and wading through the intricate and sometimes frustrating control scheme, this game had me thoroughly hooked. There is so much to do and see it's hard to play for just a few hours at a time. With a sound (if a bit predicable) storyline, a wide assortment of missions and sidequests to explore, as well as a dizzying number of ship types to engage, ID2 is one of the best space combat sims I've seen this year. I would seriously caution a rookie to cut his or her teeth on something a bit more forgiving, but the rest of you should feel free to jump in with both feet. – **KRISTIAN**



There's a lot to look at when you're in the cockpit

You'll have plenty of chances to show off your dogfighting skills

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** PARTICLE SYSTEMS ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 24

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

- **Concept:** A highly detailed flight sim with an elaborate storyline
- **Graphics:** Suspect polygon integrity at times, but other than that, dazzling
- **Sound:** Voice acting up the yng-yang enhances the average space-combat sim "bangs" and "pows"
- **Playability:** This is not a game for the meek. Be prepared to focus a lot of effort into learning the interface
- **Entertainment:** Space combat flight sim fanatics will have a field day with this one
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Contrary to the title, this game puts you quite far from the edge of chaos. Instead, Independence War 2 places you in the middle of a very orderly adventure. During my hours with the title, the mission structure constantly consisted of the following – autopilot on, wait, autopilot off, wait, ship fight, repeat. This constant milk running may have been more tolerable had the battles been joystick-clutching, sweat-inducing dogfights with a mass of other ships. Instead, all I got was the pleasure of shooting down a single ship, maybe two, then being shoved right back into autopilot hotkey monotony. This game looks nice and plays smooth, yet lacks anything new or any compelling reason to play the campaign over the quick battle. You may find Independence War 2 wonderful if you've the patience for extended downtime. Otherwise, you'll think it average.

JAY – 7.5

PC

RED FACTION

RED FIVE STANDING BY

The market for first-person shooters is one of the most healthy segments of the industry. It seems every few months there's another attack on the genre from a different angle. Some work, some don't. I've been hearing about Red Factor for some time. Much of the staff will pop a wheelie at the mention of the game, and although it looked good on the PlayStation 2, I remained skeptical. I am no longer a skeptic. Red Faction has great action, precise control, interesting vehicles, intricate weapons, and an engine dubbed Geo-Mod which puts this game in a class by itself.

A rocket launcher doesn't leave a little mark on a wall (as it would with most other releases of this type). With the Geo-Mod engine, you'll see either a huge scorring mark, or the surface you hit will be completely obliterated, revealing a smoldering hole where solid rock once stood. There are various other weapons which will allow you to do the same thing, and the game will have you scrambling to find them all.

Although reminiscent of Half-Life, Red Faction offers a tighter play environment and one of the most satisfying FPS gaming experiences I've had in a long time. Bnstling with replay value and gripping gameplay, this is one release that no fan of the genre should be without. – **KRISTIAN**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 32-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** VOLITION
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 18

THE BOTTOM LINE

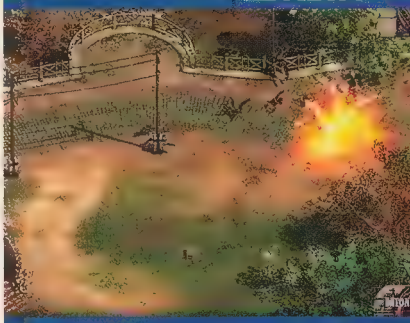
MATURE M ESRB **8.75**

■ **Concept:** The story of one man's journey to escape from a Martian mining colony and the guns he uses to do it
■ **Graphics:** Crisp, clean graphics and a great engine give you an exceptional palette to play in
■ **Sound:** The music and effects are well executed and won't distract you from serious play
■ **Playability:** This is vintage FPS control through and through. The only way you'd be confused is if you've never played one before
■ **Entertainment:** Take the single-player story, which is fun, then add multiplayer capabilities and a level editor, and you've got one sweet game
■ **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

I loved it on PlayStation 2, and I love it just as much on PC. Red Faction's single-player has remained exactly the same in this conversion (albeit with touched-up graphics). However, thanks to the user-friendly level editor, there should be plenty of new material for people to explore in the very near future. Another aspect sure to give the game longevity is its impressive multiplayer, which allows a crowd of players to destroy each other and the environment they're fighting in. Lackluster cutscenes and occasional chugging prevent Red Faction from achieving a new benchmark in the first-person shooter arena, but its infectious story and amazing Geo-Mod engine will keep it in a class all its own for a while. This is the game every PC owner will soon be talking about, so you better get in on the ground floor.

JAY – 9



PC

COMMANDOS 2: MEN OF COURAGE

YOU MAY FIRE WHEN READY

After spending a few hours with Commandos 2, I realized that playing this game is a little like having a girlfriend: You experience brief periods of joy followed by extended intervals of utter confusion. To start off, I don't think I've ever felt quite as lost as I did during my first hour with this title. The in-game help functionality is weak at best, and figuring out how to begin a mission is usually quite a task. It almost seems like this title was designed only for those who are already well acquainted with the gameplay scheme. Although that may be nice if you've been waiting for this game for a while, newbies will sink like a rock in a pond.

On the upside, once you're able to accurately discern just what exactly your current mission is and you get a vague idea of how you're going to use your characters to carry it out, this game is pretty fun. There are a bunch of different ways to attack every situation presented to you from a tactical standpoint, and usually the more patient you are with your maneuvers, the better the chance you'll achieve what you set out to do. Although this is not a game for rookies, Commandos vets should feel more or less at home. – **KRISTIAN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T ESRB **7.5**

■ **Concept:** Squad-based [illegible] World War II
■ **Graphics:** Nothing to complain about here – the animations are fluid and the environments are crisp
■ **Sound:** Some nice ambient battle effects and just the right amount of voice acting serve this game well
■ **Playability:** The manual is virtually useless, leaving you to figure things out for yourself
■ **Entertainment:** When you know what you have to do, and you're actually doing it, things can get pretty cool
■ **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

A well-done tutorial would have been nice, but eventually I figured out what the heck was going on and had a decent time with Commandos 2. This slow-paced and laborious game isn't for everyone, but hardcore strategy fans will find a lot to chew on here.

MATT – 7.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 9-PLAYER STRATEGY
■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** PYRO STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 15

GAME BOY COLOR

DRAGON WARRIOR MONSTERS 2

DRAGÓMON TARA & COBI

Like Pokémon games of different colors, Dragon Warrior Monsters 2 (presented in two slightly different versions: Tara's Adventure and Cobi's Journey) encourages players to link up with others to battle and gain access to things that can't be found solo. How one goes about creating and powering up killer companions is quite unique though. Rather than fighting one-on-one duels, monsters are put in parties of three with the expectation that their abilities complement each other. Thus, the ultimate combo is one creature that attacks, one that heals, and one that powers up the others. Going up levels by seeking fights is important, but breeding male and female monsters is the true path to glory.

There's no doubt that Dragon Warrior Monsters 2 is a fine game in its own right, but it's hard to shake that been there, done that Pokémon feel. Also, as good as this game is, I find it inferior to the recently released Dragon Warrior III. If you do not share my prejudices, however, have at it! – **JAY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E

8

- **Concept:** Pokémon presented in a Dragon Warrior style
- **Graphics:** Really sharp. Still, monster animations akin to Dragon Warrior III would have been appreciated
- **Sound:** Nothing worth cranking it up for
- **Playability:** If you push A when facing something you're unable to talk to or investigate, the menu screen pops up. Annoying!
- **Entertainment:** Hours upon hours of quality role-playing fun for you and your favorite slimes
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I wanted to pan Dragon Warrior Monsters 2 as a Pokémon pretender. Nay, for I cannot. It's very much like my beloved Dragon Warrior III, but with über-cute monsters instead of created allies (and not quite as good). It's almost too intricate an RPG to waste on kids, but they'll like it, too.

JUSTIN – 8

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** ENIX
■ **DEVELOPER** ENIX ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 25

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E

8

GAME BOY ADVANCE

BREATH OF FIRE

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

The 16-bit port floodgates have been open since the launch of the Game Boy Advance, but Breath of Fire is the first role-playing game to squeeze through. Originally a joint SNES venture between Square Soft and Capcom, this is the tale of a boy who could transform into a dragon, and the misfit companions he meets along the way.

In many ways, BoF is a pretty standard turn-based quest. You'll level-up your characters, explore an overworld, and vanquish planet-threatening foes. Subtle features, though, enhance the game. Each of the characters in your party has some special power, like hunting, fishing, or digging. Day turns into night, changing the face of the environment. You can trade up for better equipment. Bosses still have some fight in them after their lifebar is depleted. There's all kinds of cool little junk going on here.

Can I bag on anything in this game? Not really. I'm straining my brain to think of something, so there obviously aren't many faults. Breath of Fire lacks the amazing creativity of Dragon Warrior III, but knows few other superiors in the handheld role-playing realm (Zelda doesn't count, Spanky). You got GBA? You dig RPGs? Breath of Fire is your hook-up. – **JUSTIN**


Bo can hunt and walk through overworld trees
A stealth mission has you infiltrating a town
"Say hello to my little friend!"
Ryu's mullet reveals the game's age

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM
■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM/SQUARE SOFT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14

- **Concept:** Picture-perfect port of a highly respected SNES RPG
- **Graphics:** Nice overlays, sprites and effects. Everything's exactly how I remember it
- **Sound:** Standard fairytale fare
- **Playability:** Much more to do than just turn-based combat, and everything comes off smoothly
- **Entertainment:** This was a fun RPG back in the day, and still retains all of its enjoyment
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

If you haven't played this SNES classic yet, the Game Boy Advance version is a perfect substitute. Even in its miniature form, every little graphical detail is intact and the quest hasn't been altered in the slightest. Of course, many of the details are lost due to the game's small nature, but if you squint, you can still see rats scurrying across a dungeon floor, and fish flopping within the ponds. Square Soft co-developed this title with Capcom, which is clearly evident within the battle system. This RPG makes good use of every character in the party, demanding that you use their different skills to pass specific roadblocks. It's a lengthy quest, and I'm surprised Capcom fit it on such a small cart. Breath of Fire was a wonderful release back in the day, and it can still hold its own with today's technically advanced RPGs.

REINER – 8

GAME BOY ADVANCE

FROGGER'S ADVENTURE: TEMPLE OF THE FROG

FROM THE DEPTHS

With his safari shorts and little backpack, it's obvious Konami is attempting to transform Frogger into a character the kiddies can relate to. Hate to break it to you marketing types, but perhaps more time should be spent on Froggy's games rather than his image. Temple of the Frog, despite its lackluster graphics and sound, could have been alright. I was enjoying the simple gameplay, but soon found myself miffed at the absence of effort in the level design. Obstacles repeat themselves, there's no time limit on finishing levels, and safe zones for Frogger are abundant.

Patience will get you farther in this game than skill. I was able to finish Temple of the Frog in about an hour and a half. There are no extra levels to be unlocked, and no reason to play a second time through. This means, were you to buy it new, you'd be paying over $20 an hour to play this game. Temple of the Frog belongs in the same place its title character does – a swamp. – **JAY**

SECOND OPINION

Boy, Konami sure figured out how to make the least of the GBA's capabilities with this one. Gamers looking for a satisfying meal in Temple of the Frog will find themselves going hungry.

MATT – 5

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5

- **Concept:** Take part in Frogger's greatest challenge since he decided to cross the highway!
- **Graphics:** As a passerby asked me, "Is this Game Boy Color or Game Boy Advance?"
- **Sound:** The 20-year-old arcade soundtrack is more pleasant
- **Playability:** A slight slip of the thumb easily spells death
- **Entertainment:** Somewhat fun to play, but also embarrassing to own
- **Replay Value:** Low

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 23

GAME BOY ADVANCE

FORTRESS

THE TETRIS OFFENSIVE

Previously giving the Game Boy Advance a fair share of SNES conversions, Majesco is now stepping up to the handheld plate with its first original title. Always played as a one-on-one battle, be it against another human or the computer, Fortress has players selecting one of four time periods (which only affects how your battlefield will look), then building your base out of falling Tetris-inspired pieces. As the pieces match together, walls and towers form. When certain building requirements are met, weapons and monsters occasionally appear to use against your enemy.

The play in Fortress is fun and challenging, but the game's structure holds it back from being great. The first 20 seconds of play usually decides the winner, although the inconsistency of piece movement can turn a match around. Also, not being able to simultaneously observe your opponent's actions is frustrating. Fortress is basically a good idea that got a bit fouled in the execution. – **JAY**

SECOND OPINION

Fortress gave me a headache, both from squinting and wondering just what the computer was doing to tan my hide. A new variation on Tetris, Fortress fails to be very playable.

JUSTIN – 6.25

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.5

- **Concept:** Tetris meets Rampart to create a unique one-on-one castle battle game
- **Graphics:** Not that far above what would be possible on Game Boy Color
- **Sound:** The grating sounds will have you turning the volume down after a couple rounds
- **Playability:** Building is slowed by not being able to quickly shift pieces right and left
- **Entertainment:** Not put together well enough to reach furious play levels
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO ■ **DEVELOPER** PIPEDREAM INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 21

GAME BOY ADVANCE

JURASSIC PARK III: ISLAND ATTACK

DINOBORE!

What would be worse: spending another hour with this game, or having a hungry compy trapped in my boxer shorts? To say the very least, this game is worth losing your manhood over.

Island Attack's stunning graphics, which showcase the finest of details (like reflections on water and beautifully painted landscapes), are trampled to death by the appalling character animations and horrendous gameplay exercises. The movement is precise, yet the 360-degree targeting is too loose and nearly impossible to utilize. Of course, what good is aiming when you don't actually have the power to kill a dinosaur? Sure, you can stun them, but you can't deliver the final blow. I wonder if the "E" rating has anything to do with this? Hmmm...

Because of this, most of your time is spent running. Thankfully, though, the true heart of gameplay lies elsewhere – mainly in opening doors and smashing boxes! That's right. To open a rusty door, you'll need to jam on the B button as quickly as you can. You'll do this more than you'd ever care to. Wow... a license with infinite possibilities, and the developers devoted most of the action to opening doors.

The movie was exciting, frightening, and gruesome. The game, on the other hand, is just plain gruesome, and for all the wrong reasons. Avoid it like the plague. – **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

3

- **Concept:** Prehistoric isometric action with door puzzles, 360 degree targeting, and a motorcycle minigame
- **Graphics:** The mediocre character animation clashes against the impressive environmental design
- **Sound:** It didn't sound like the spinosaurus sounded like a rhinoceros
- **Playability:** The movement is precise, but the targeting is way off the mark, and the puzzles are obnoxious
- **Entertainment:** The kind of game that will make you smile when the game Overscreen appears
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

Imagine the movie *Jurassic Park III* filled with characters endlessly opening doors and pounding on boxes. Next, imagine no matter how hard the characters try, they can't kill anything that pursues them. What do you mean that doesn't sound interesting? You're obviously not cool enough for this game.

KRISTIAN – 4.25

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI/UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** MOBILI 27 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 19

CHARTS

In association with the NPD TRSTS Video Games Service, Charts presents an in-depth listing of the best-selling software on a month-to-month basis. Are the games you spend your hard-earned dollars on top sellers? Take a look below to find out. We've also compiled a listing of the top-selling Japanese software, and, of course, we included a Top 10 list of the games the GI staff is currently enjoying.

NPD TOP 20

Listings Based Upon NPD Data For August 2001. Based On Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	N/A	**Madden NFL 2002**	PS2	Aug-01	$51

John Madden is the most overrated commentator in all of sports, spouting out jibberish like "Boom!", "Looks like that one had too much pop!", and "If you touch it, you gotta catch it!" One thing is for certain, though – his game continues to dominate the video game scene, and gamers never seem to tire of this excellent pigskin release.

2	2	**Pokémon Crystal**	GBC	Jul-01	$30

The tykes out there must not understand that "Gotta catch 'em all" doesn't mean that you "Gotta buy 'em all." As baffling as the Pokémon phenomenon may be, it is still sweeping across the nation, entertaining kids and adults alike. When will it end? Possibly never. Nintendo has already promised a sequel for Game Boy Advance, plus several spin-offs for the GameCube. Poké-d'oh!

3	3	**Super Mario Advance**	GBA	Jun-01	$30

After a solid launch, the Game Boy Advance is now experiencing a software drought. Within the foreseeable future, a handful of quality titles are on the way, but for now, Mario rules the roost. This remake of Super Mario 2 continues to sell well, and the recently released Mario Kart Super Circuit is quickly climbing up the charts.

4	1	**Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec**	PS2	Jul-01	$50

Yo bay-bay, this is the Snoop D-o-double-g-y and I'm representin' off the heezy for my west coast ridaz at Sony, nephew. For sheezy my neezy. You know I'm always rollin' in my six-four drop, but this game got all the fly whips, from the five to the six. Everybody betta overstand that the "G" in GT 3 stand for gangsta, and these other racin' games is straight booty.

5	5	**NCAA Football 2002**	PS2	Jul-01	$51

Frat Boy Talk: "Dude, check out this fresh new game I just got! NCAA Football 2002...I'm totally going to take the Cocks all the way into the Bowl, baby! Then, when I'm done with that, we're going to have a contest. Whoever gets the least amount of touchdowns in three minutes will have to do a kegstand, man! Sweet!"

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	N/A	**Mario Kart Super Circuit**	GBA	Aug-01	$29
7	N/A	**Resident Evil Code: Veronica X**	PS2	Aug-01	$51
8	N/A	**World Series Baseball 2K2**	DC	Aug-01	$41
9	4	**NBA Street**	PS2	Jun-01	$50
10	N/A	**Madden NFL 2002**	PS-X	Aug-01	$41
11	12	**Gran Turismo 2**	PS-X	Dec-99	$21
12	7	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2**	GBA	May-01	$40
13	N/A	**Spyro: Year of the Dragon**	PS-X	Oct-00	$21
14	6	**Sonic Adventure 2**	DC	Jun-01	$41
15	N/A	**Final Fantasy Tactics**	PS-X	Jan-98	$22
16	11	**The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages**	GBC	May-01	$32
17	10	**The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons**	GBC	May-01	$32
18	8	**Twisted Metal: Black**	PS2	Jun-01	$49
19	N/A	**Gundam: Journey to Jaburo**	PS2	Aug-01	$52
20	17	**Super Mario Bros. DX**	GBC	May-99	$29

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

JAPAN TOP 10

Source: Game Japan Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	**Gundam Zeonic Front 0079**	PS2
2	N/A	**Shenmue II**	DC
3	N/A	**Yi-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters 2**	PS2
4	N/A	**Devil May Cry**	PS2
5	2	**Hot Shots Golf 3**	PS2
6	N/A	**Jikkyu Powerful Pro Baseball 8**	PS2
7	N/A	**PaRappa the Rapper 2**	PS2
8	N/A	**Jikkyu World Soccer 2001**	PS2
9	N/A	**Wario Land 4**	GBA
10	N/A	**Super Trick Battle 2001**	PS-X

GAME INFORMER TOP 10

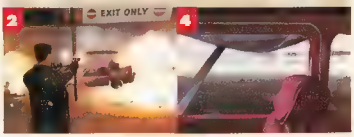
The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	1	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3**	PS2
2	N/A	**Halo**	Xbox
3	2	**Devil May Cry**	PS2
4	N/A	**Luigi's Mansion**	GC
5	3	**Madden NFL 2002**	Xbox
6	4	**Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec**	PS2
7	N/A	**Dead or Alive 3**	Xbox
8	N/A	**Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis**	PC
9	N/A	**Monster Rancher 3**	PS2
10	9	**Advance Wars**	GBA

PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Sevice Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	1	**Diablo 2: Lord of Destruction**	Jun-01	$34
2	3	**Max Payne**	Jul-01	$43
3	2	**The Sims**	Jul-01	$42
4	8	**Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000**	Oct-99	$29
5	4	**The Sims: House Party**	Mar-01	$29
6	5	**The Sims: Livin' Large**	Sep-00	$29
7	7	**Diablo 2**	Jun-00	$40
8	6	**Roller Coaster Tycoon**	Mar-99	$27
9	N/A	**Age of Empires 2: Age of Kings**	Oct-99	$44
10	N/A	**King's Quest VIII: Mask of Eternity**	Nov-98	$18



September 11, 2001

United We Stand

GAME INFORMER MAGAZINE

F-ZERO: MAXIMUM VELOCITY

■ **FORMAT** GAME BOY ADVANCE ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING
■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **REVIEWED** JUL-01

The only thing holding this game back isn't the game at all, it's the GBA. As most of you know, using the shoulder buttons is a must in F-Zero. I found that after five minutes of intense play, my hands began cramping as I attempted to lean into the turns with the L and R buttons. Of course, I didn't really care. The game had me captivated from the beginning, and no amount of digit discomfort was going to extract me from my trip down memory lane. The multiplayer capabilities are phenomenal – you can play a four-player game with only one cartridge (but with limited tracks and vehicles), or you can play any track with any vehicle if you all have carts. Chalk up another great release for the GBA. - **KRISTIAN**

9

PLAYSTATION 2

4x4 Evolution	8	May-01
Adventures of Cookie & Cream, The	8.75	Mar-01
All-Star Baseball 2002	8	May-01
Aqua Aqua	6	Mar-01
Armored Core 2: Another Age	8.5	Oct-01
Army Men: Air Attack 2	3.5	Jun-01
Army Men: Green Rogue	1	Jun-01
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	5.5	Jun-01
ATV Offroad Fury	8.5	Mar-01
Bloody Roar 3	8	Aug-01
Bouncer, The	8.5	Feb-01
Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed	8	Aug-01
Championship Surfer	7	Jan-01
City Crisis	7	Sep-01
Crazy Taxi	8.25	Jun-01
Dark Cloud	9	Jul-01
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	9	Oct-01
Devil May Cry	9.5	Oct-01
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7.5	Mar-01
Driving Emotion Type-S	8	Feb-01
Ephemeral Fantasia	4	Sep-01
Escape From Monkey Island	8.5	Sep-01
ESPN MLS Extratime	6	Jun-01
ESPN NBA 2night	4.25	May-01
ESPN NHL Hockey Night	6.25	May-01
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	8.25	Jan-01
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	5	Sep-01
Extermination	8.25	Sep-01
F1 Championship Season 2000	7.75	Feb-01
F1 Racing Championship	8.75	Apr-01
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	6.5	Jul-01
Gallop Racer 2001	7.5	Sep-01
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	7.75	Jan-01
Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	9	Aug-01
Heroes of Might and Magic	4.5	Jul-01
High Heat Baseball 2002	7.75	May-01
ICO	9	Sep-01
Kengo: Master of Bushido	7.25	Mar-01
Kessen II	8	Oct-01
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	8.25	Aug-01
Knockout Kings 2001	9	Mar-01
Le Mans 24 Hours	8.5	Sep-01
Madden NFL 2002	9.75	Oct-01
MDK2: Armageddon	7.5	May-01
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	6.5	Sep-01
Motor Mayhem	7	Aug-01
MTV Music Generator 2	8.5	Jun-01
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	7	Aug-01
NASCAR Heat	8.5	Aug-01
NBA Hoopz	5.75	May-01
NBA Live 2001	8.25	Feb-01
NBA ShootOut 2001	6.5	Apr-01
NBA Street	9.25	Aug-01
NCAA Final Four 2001	3	Feb-01
NCAA Football 2002	9	Oct-01
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	3.25	Feb-01
NHL FaceOff 2001	1	Apr-01
Oni	6.5	Mar-01
Onimusha: Warlords	8.75	Mar-01
Portal Runner	4	Oct-01
Q-Ball Billiards Master	4.5	Jan-01
Quake II Revolution	7.75	May-01
Rayman 2: Revolution	8	Apr-01
RC Revenge Pro	5.5	Feb-01
Red Faction	9	Jun-01
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	9.25	Aug-01
Ring of Red	9	Apr-01
Rugby	7.5	Aug-01
Rumble Racing	7.75	May-01
Rune: Viking Warlord	7.25	Sep-01
Shadow of Destiny	8.75	Mar-01
Silent Hill 2	7	Oct-01
Silent Scope 2: Dark Silhouette	8	Sep-01
Star Wars: Starfighter	9.25	Mar-01
Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing	2.5	May-01
Stretch Panic	7.5	Sep-01
Surfing H3O	3	Jan-01
Test Drive Off-Road Wide Open	3.5	Sep-01
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	6	Apr-01
Time Crisis 2	8.25	Oct-01
Theme Park Roller Coaster	7.5	Jan-01
Tokyo Xtreme Racer: Zero	8	Jun-01
Top Gun: Combat Zones	7.75	Oct-01
Twisted Metal: Black	9.5	Jul-01
Unison	7.75	May-01
Warriors of Might and Magic	7.75	Apr-01
Wirtback: Covert Ops	7.5	Apr-01
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	7	Mar-01
World Destruction League: WildArms	5.5	Sep-01
Yanya Cabalista: City Skater	7.5	Oct-01
Zone of the Enders	9.25	May-01

PLAYSTATION

007 Racing	7	Jan-01
102 Dalmations: Puppies to the Rescue	6.5	Feb-01
Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	8	Aug-01
Battle Hunter	5	Sep-01
Blade	4	Jan-01
Bugs Bunny & Taz: Time Busters	8.5	Feb-01
Castlevania Chronicles	6.75	Oct-01
Championship Surfer	7	Jan-01
Championship Motocross 2001 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	6.5	Feb-01
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	7.75	Jan-01
Dance Dance Revolution	8.75	Apr-01
Dance Dance Revolution: Disney Mix	6.25	Sep-01
Darkstone	7.25	Apr-01
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix	7.25	Jul-01
Digimon Digital Card Battle	7.5	Sep-01
Disney's Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge	6	May-01
Disney's Atlantis The Lost Empire	7.25	Aug-01
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7	Jan-01
Driver 2	8.75	Jan-01
Ducati World	5.5	Feb-01
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	4.5	Feb-01
Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix	8.5	Mar-01
Fina Fantasy Chronicles	9	Jul-01
Freestyle Motocross: McGrath Vs. Pastrana	3	Jan-01
Golden Tee Golf	5	Jan-01
Grinch, The	6	Feb-01
HBO Boxing	3	Feb-01
Jarrett & Labonte Stock Car Racing	7.75	Jan-01
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	7.5	Jan-01
Madden NFL 2002	8	Sep-01
March Madness 2001	8.25	Feb-01
Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX	8.5	Jun-01
Mega Man X5	7	Feb-01
Mets: Slug X	6	Aug-01
Mike Tyson Boxing	5	Dec-00
MLB 2002	6	Jul-01
Motocross Mania	5	Sep-01
Moto GP World Tour	7	Jan-01
Mummy, The	0.75	Feb-01
NASCAR Heat	6.5	Feb-01
NBA Live 2001	8	Dec-00
NCAA Final Four	5.5	Jan-01
NFL GameDay 2002	6	Sep-01
One Piece Mansion	7.75	Oct-01
Persona 2: Eternal Punishment	8	Feb-01
Point Blank 3	7.25	May-01
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	5	Jan-01
Razor Freestyle Scooter	8	Jan-01
RC de Go	7.5	Jan-01
Road to El Dorado, The	1	Feb-01
Sasuke: Journey West	8.5	Aug-01
Simpsons Wrestling, The	2	Jun-01
Spec Ops: Ranger Elite	6	Jul-01
Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro	8.5	Oct-01
Star Wars: Demolition	7	Jan-01
Strikers 1945	6.75	May-01
Supercross	5.75	Apr-01
Time Crisis: Project Titan	7	Jun-01
World is Not Enough, The	7	Dec-00
Tales of Destiny II	7.75	Sep-01
Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf	8	Feb-01
Tomb Raider Chronicles	7	Jan-01
Tornado: The Last Hope	2.75	Dec-00
Top Shop	7.5	Jul-01
Toy Story Racer	5	Apr-01
Triple Play Baseball	7	Jan-01
Ultimate Fighting Championship	7	Jan-01
WCW Backstage Assault	3	Dec-00
Woody Woodpecker Racing	3	Jan-01
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3	Dec-00
World's Scariest Police Chases	6.75	Aug-01
WWF SmackDown 2: Know Your Role	9	Dec-00
X-Men: Mutant Academy 2	8.25	Oct-01
You Don't Know Jack: Mock 2	5	Mar-01

NINTENDO 64

Aidyn Chronicles: The First Mage	0.5	May-01
Banjo-Tooie	9	Jan-01
Cruis'n Exotica	6	Feb-01
Conker's Bad Fur Day	9	Apr-01
Donald Duck: Goin Quackers	7.5	Feb-01
Dr. Mario 64	8.5	May-01
Hercules: The Legendary Journeys	4.75	Feb-01
Hey You, Pikachu	4	Jan-01
Indiana Jones: The Infernal Machine	6.75	Jan-01
Mario Party 3	4	May-01
Mega Man 64	7.25	Dec-00
Mickey's Speedway USA	6	Jan-01
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	7.5	Dec-00
Paper Mario	7.5	Feb-01
Pokémon Puzzle League	8.5	Dec-00
Pokémon Stadium 2	6	May-01
Spider-Man	8	Jan-01
Star Wars: Episode I Battle for Naboo	8.5	Jan-01
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	9.25	Oct-01
WCW Backstage Assault	3.5	Dec-00
WWF No Mercy	9.5	Dec-00

DREAMCAST

18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker	8.5	Jun-01
4x4 Evolution	8.75	Dec-00
Alien Front Online	8	Sep-01
Atari Anniversary Edition	6	Sep-01
BANG! Gunship Elite	8	Jan-01
Championship Surfer	5	Mar-01
Chicken Run	5	Jan-01
Confidential Mission	5.5	Jun-01
Crazy Taxi 2	8.75	Jul-01
D2	4.75	Oct-00
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	8	Feb-01
Daytona USA	7	Oct-00
Dino Crisis	6.5	Jan-01
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	7	Oct-00
ECW Anarchy Rulz	3	Mar-01
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	4.5	Mar-01
F355 Challenge: Passione Rossa	7.5	Dec-00
Flogan Bros.	8.25	Aug-01
Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge	7	Dec-00
Grandia II	8	Jan-01
Illbleed	5	Jun-01
Jet Grind Radio	8.25	Dec-00
Kao the Kangaroo	7	Apr-01
Kiss: Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child	4.5	Feb-01
Last Blade 2: Heart of the Samurai, The	8	Sep-01
Looney Tunes Space Race	7	Jan-01
Mars Matrix	8	May-01
Metropolis Street Racer	9	Dec-00
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	8	Jan-01
NBA 2K1	9.5	Jan-01
NCAA College Football 2K2: Road to the Rose Bowl	8	Oct-01
Next Tetris: On-Line Addition, The	7	Dec-00
Ooga Booga	6	Oct-01
Outtrigger	6.25	Jun-01
PBA Tour Bowling 2001	6.25	Jun-01
Phantasy Star Online	9	Mar-01
Pod: Speedzone	3.5	Jan-01
Project Justice	7	Feb-01
Quake III Arena	9.25	Jan-01
Razor Freestyle Scooter	7.5	Oct-01
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2	7.5	Jan-01
Record of Lodoss War	8.5	May-01
Red Dog	7.75	Dec-00
Resident Evil 2	8	Jan-01
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	8	Jan-01
Samba De Amigo	5.5	Dec-00
Sega Bass Fishing	8.5	Oct-01
Sega Smash Pack	9	May-01
Shenmue	6	Dec-00
Silent Scope	7.5	Jan-01
Skies of Arcadia	9	Jan-01
Soldier of Fortune	7.75	Aug-01
Sonic Adventure 2	7.5	Aug-01
Sonic Shuffle	7	Jan-01
Speed Devils Online	7.5	Jan-01
Spider-Man	8	Jun-01
Sports Jam	7.75	Aug-01
Starlancer	7	Dec-00
Star Wars: Demolition	7	Jan-01
Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles	8	Jan-01
Super Runabout: San Francisco Edition	8	Jan-01
Surf Rocket Racers	5.5	Feb-01
Test Drive Le Mans	4.75	Jan-01
Test Drive V-Rally	1	Jan-01
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	7	Feb-01
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	9.75	Jan-01
Typing of the Dead	9	Feb-01
Unreal Tournament	8.5	Apr-01
Vanishing Point	7.5	Mar-01
World Series Baseball 2K2	7	Oct-01
Worms World Party	8	May-01
Xtreme Sports	7	Jan-01

PC

America	6.5	Apr-01
American McGee's Alice	9	Feb-01
Anachronox	7.25	Oct-01
Anarchy Online	8.5	Sep-01
Arcanum: Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura	6.75	Oct-01
Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal	9.75	Aug-01
Black & White	9	Jun-01
Blade of Darkness	8.25	May-01
Blair Witch Volume One: Rustin Parr	6.75	Dec-00
Call to Power II	6	Jan-01
Clive Barker's Undying	8	May-01
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	6.5	Apr-01
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2	9.5	Dec-00
Cultures	7.5	Sep-01
Desperados	7.25	Sep-01
Diablo II: Lord of Destruction	7.25	Sep-01
Echelon	9	Jul-01
Emperor: Battle for Dune	8	Aug-01
Escape From Monkey Island	8.25	Jun-01
EverQuest: The Scars of Velious	9.5	Jun-01
Evil Islands	5.25	May-01
Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel	8.75	May-01
Fate of the Dragon	6	Jun-01
Freedom: First Resistance	5.75	Mar-01
Gangsters 2	4	Aug-01
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	9.25	Feb-01
Gunman Chronicles	8.25	Feb-01
Half-Life: Blue Shift	8.75	Aug-01
Half-Life: Counter-Strike	9.75	Jan-01
Hitman: Codename 47	8.75	Feb-01
Hostile Waters: Antaeus Rising	8	Sep-01
Icewind Dale: Heart of Winter	9	Apr-01
Insane	7.25	Mar-01
Jagged Alliance 2: Unfinished Business	5.75	Apr-01
Kingdom Under Fire	6.25	Mar-01
Max Payne	9.5	Oct-01
Mechcommander 2	8.75	Aug-01
MechWarrior 4: Vengeance	8.75	Jan-01
Midtown Madness 2	7.75	Dec-00
Moon Project, The	7.75	May-01
Myst II: Exile	7.5	Jul-01
NASCAR Racing 4	8	Apr-01
No One Lives Forever	7.75	Dec-00
Poseidon	8	Sep-01
Project IGI: I'm Going In	3.5	Mar-01
Quake III: Team Arena	3.5	Mar-01
Rainbow Six: Covert Ops Essentials	8.75	Dec-00
Rune	7.75	Dec-00
Sacrifice	8.5	Jan-01
Sea Dogs	8.5	Mar-01
Serious Sam	8.5	Jun-01
Sheep	7.5	Feb-01
Shogun: Total War Warlord Edition	9	Aug-01
Simcoaster	7.75	Apr-01
Sims: House Party, The	7.5	May-01
Squad Leader	6.25	Jan-01
Star Trek, Away Team	4.5	Jun-01
Mega Man Battle Network	8.25	Oct-01
Namco Museum	7	Aug-01
Pac-Man: Collection	6	Jul-01
Pinobee: Wings of Adventure	8	Jul-01
Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure	7.5	Jul-01
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2	4.25	Jul-01
Spider-Man: Mysterio's Menace	7.5	Sep-01
Super Dodge Ball Advance	9	Jul-01
Super Mario Advance	8.5	Jul-01
Super Street Fighter II: Turbo Revival	9	Aug-01
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	9.25	Jul-01
Wendy: Every Witch Way	7.5	Sep-01
X-Men: Reign of Apocalypse	7.75	Oct-01

GAME BOY COLOR

Action Man: Search for Base X	2.5	Apr-01
Aladdin	7	Feb-01
Alone in The Dark: The New Nightmare	7.5	Sep-01
Batman: Chaos in Gotham	6	Mar-01
Buffy: the Vampire Slayer	2	Dec-00
Chicken Run	4	Jan-01
Commander Keen	7	Aug-01
Coco 2	6.5	Apr-01
Donald Duck: Goin Quackers	7.5	Jan-01
Donkey Kong Country	8.75	Jan-01
Dragon's Lair	6	Dec-00
Dragon Warrior I & II	7	Dec-00
Dragon Warrior III	8.5	Sep-01
Frogger 2	7.5	Dec-00
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	2	Feb-01
Hoyle Card Games	9	Mar-01
Inspector Gadget	6.5	Jan-01
Kirby Tilt 'N' Tumble	8.75	May-01
Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages, The	9.5	Jul-01
Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons, The	9.25	Jul-01

STAR WARS: EPISODE I OBI-WAN'S ADVENTURES

■ **FORMAT** GAME BOY COLOR ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **REVIEWED** MAR-01

Despite Yoda's concerns, THQ has deemed Obi-Wan worthy of Jedi Knighthood, and as inexperienced as he may be, his first GBC adventure is an impressive one filled with fast-paced action, outstanding visuals, and a challenging difficulty. In many ways, this title is the little brother to Jedi Power Battles. Deflecting lasers is delivered identically, and the level breakdown is also right on par. My praise for this game is high, and no, Star Wars has nothing to do with it. Well...maybe a little. Straight up, this is a pocket-sized thrill ride that you won't want to miss. – **REINER**

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Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Dominion Wars	4.25	Sep-01
Star Trek: Starfleet Command Vol.2	8.5	Mar-01
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	6.25	Dec-00
Starpeace	7	Apr-01
Starship Troopers	7.75	Jan-01
Startopia	9.25	Aug-01
Steel Soldiers	6.25	Aug-01
Timeline	5.75	Feb-01
Tomb Raider Chronicles	4	Feb-01
Tribes 2	8	Jun-01
Tropico	9.25	Jul-01
Wizards & Warriors	5	Dec-00
World War II Online: Blitzkrieg	8.25	Aug-01
You Don't Know Jack: 5th Dimension	8	Jan-01
Zeus: Master of Olympus	8.5	Jan-01

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Advance Wars	9.25	Sep-01
Army Men Advance	5.5	Aug-01
Bomberman Tournament	8.5	Sep-01
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon	8.75	Jul-01
Chu Chu Rocket	8	Jul-01
Earthworm Jim	7	Jul-01
ESPN Final Round Golf 2002	7	Sep-01
F-Zero: Maximum Velocity	9	Jul-01
Final Fight One	7	Oct-01
Fire Pro Wrestling	8.5	Jul-01
GT Advance Championship Racing	6	Mar-01
Indion 3D	8	Jul-01
Jurassic Park III: Park Builder	7.25	Oct-01
Jurassic Park III: The DNA Factor	2.75	Oct-01
Klonoa: Empire Of Dreams	7.5	Oct-01
Krazy Racers	7	Jul-01
Lady Sia	7.5	Oct-01
Mario Kart Super Circuit	9.5	Sep-01
Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure, The	7	Mar-01
Little Mermaid II: Pinball Frenzy	7.5	Dec-00
Looney Tunes Racing	4.25	Mar-01
M&M's Minis Madness	6	Dec-00
Magi Nation	8.5	May-01
Mario Tennis	6.75	Feb-01
Marvin Strikes Back!	9	Apr-01
Mega Man Xtreme	7	Mar-01
Metal Walker	7.75	Dec-00
Mickey's Speedway USA	6	May-01
MTV Skateboarding featuring Andy Macdonald	6.75	Dec-00
MTV Sports Ultimate BMX	7	Apr-01
Pokémon Crystal	6.75	Oct-01
Pokémon Puzzle Challenge	8.5	Feb-01
Pokémon Silver & Gold	9	Dec-00
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	6.5	Jan-01
Q*Bert	6.5	Feb-01
Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking	7.75	Apr-01
Road Rash	6	Feb-01
Shrek: Fairy Tale Freakdown	0.5	Jun-01
Simpsons: Night of the Living Treehouse of Horror, The	7.5	Jun-01
Snoopy Tennis	7	Jul-01
Spider-Man 2: The Sinister Six	8	Aug-01
Star Wars: Episode I Obi-Wan's Adventures	8	Mar-01
Tech Deck Skateboarding	3	Jun-01
Tiny Toon	7.5	Apr-01
Tomb Raider: Curse of the Sword	8	Sep-01
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	6	Jan-01
Toy Story Racer	4	May-01
Trouballs	8	May-01
Wendy: Every Witch Way	7.5	Sep-01
WWF Betrayal	3	Oct-01
X-Men: Wolverine's Rage	7	Aug-01

ILLBLEED

■ **FORMAT** DREAMCAST ■ **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
■ **PUBLISHER** AMUSEMENT INTERFACE ASSOCIATE
■ **REVIEWED** JUN-01

Although there are some easy comparisons to be made with Capcom's classic Resident Evil series, nothing can really prepare you for the surreal world that is Illbleed. From front to back, Illbleed is packed with stilted dialogue, illogical plot points, incomprehensible random events, and bizarre enemies that seem to point to heavy consumption of hallucinogens on the part of the development team. – **MATT**

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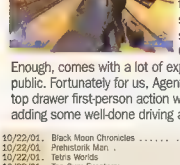
NEW RELEASES

Release Date	Title	Publisher/ Distributor	System
10/16/01	3D Pool All Stars	Titus	GBC
10/16/01	Baldur's Gate: Original Saga	Interplay	PC
10/16/01	Batman: Vengeance	Ubi Soft	PS2
10/16/01	Bomberman Online	Sega	DC
10/16/01	Deadly Dozen	WizardWorks	PC
10/16/01	Dragon's Lair 3D	UbiSoft	PC
10/16/01	Harvest Moon: Save the Home and	Crave	PS2
10/16/01	Kurutsa	Sony	PS2
10/16/01	Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	PS2
10/16/01	Monsters, Inc	THQ	GBC
10/16/01	NASCAR Thunder 2002	Electronic Arts	PS2
10/16/01	No One Lives Forever	Vivendi Universal	PS2
10/16/01	Pajama Sam: You Are What You Eat	Infogrames	PS-X
10/16/01	Project Eden	Eidos	PS2
10/16/01	Robocop	Titus	GBC
10/16/01	Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	PC
10/16/01	Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	PS2
10/16/01	SWIFT 3: Game of the Year	Vivendi Universal	PC
10/17/01	Darkened Skye	Macmillan	PC
10/17/01	Devil May Cry	Capcom	PS2
10/17/01	WW III: Black Gold	Macmillan	PC
10/18/01	Zoo Tycoon	Microsoft	PC
10/19/01	Sabrina the Animated Series: Spooked	Vivendi Universal	GBC
10/19/01	Space Ace	Digital Leisure	PC
11/1/01	American Deer Hunting	Interplay	PS-X
11/1/01	Arc Fatalis	Fishtank Interactive	PC
11/1/01	Beam Breakers	Fishtank Interactive	PC
11/1/01	Buffy the Vampire Slayer	Fox Interactive	PC
11/1/01	Castrol Honda Superbike 2	Interplay	PS-X
11/1/01	Dark Arena	Majesco	GBA
11/1/01	ESPN National Hockey Night 2002	Konami	Xbox
11/1/01	ESPN NBA Tonight 2002	Konami	Xbox
11/1/01	ESPN NFL PrimeTime	Konami	Xbox
11/1/01	Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth	Atlus	PS-X
11/1/01	Jeanette Lee's Virtual Pool	Interplay	PS-X
11/1/01	Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2	Eidos	PS2
11/1/01	Mad Dash	Eidos	Xbox
11/1/01	Mech Warrior 4: Expansion Pack	Microsoft	PC
11/1/01	Monsters, Inc.	Sony	PS2
11/1/01	Shadow Man: Second Coming	Acclaim	PS2
11/1/01	Shrek	TDK Mediactive	Xbox
11/1/01	Shrek Activity Center	Activision	PC
11/1/01	SOCOM: US Navy Seals	Sony	PS2
11/1/01	Wizardry VIII	Sir Tech	PC
11/1/01	X-Com: Alliance	Hasbro Interactive	PC
11/2/01	NHL Hitz	Midway	Xbox
11/5/01	Dark Summit	THQ	Xbox
11/5/01	Dead or Alive 3	Tecmo	Xbox
11/5/01	Nancy Drew: Final Scene	Dreamcatcher	PC
11/5/01	Persian Wars	Dreamcatcher	PC
11/5/01	Star Trek Voyager: Elite Forces	Majesco	PS2
11/5/01	Star Wars Rogue Leader 2: Rogue Squadron	LucasArts	GC
11/5/01	Wonderbuck	Interplay	PC
11/6/01	Battle Realms	Ubi Soft	PC
11/6/01	Disney's Tarzan Untamed	Ubi Soft	PS2
11/6/01	Drunna	Titus	PC
11/6/01	Evolution	Activision	GBA
11/6/01	FIFA Soccer 2002	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/6/01	Gradius Galaxy	Konami	GBA
11/6/01	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	Electronic Arts	GBC
11/6/01	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	Electronic Arts	PC
11/6/01	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	Electronic Arts	PS-X
11/6/01	Hendy Gendy	Eidos	PS2
11/6/01	Jackie Chan Adventures	Activision	GBA
11/6/01	JamPack Winter 2001	Sony	PS2
11/6/01	Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	THQ	GBA
11/6/01	Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	THQ	PC
11/6/01	Kao the Kangaroo	Titus	GBA
11/6/01	NASCAR Thunder 2002	Electronic Arts	Xbox
11/6/01	NBA Live 2002	Electronic Arts	PS-X
11/6/01	NBA Live 2002	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/6/01	Necrocide	Electronic Arts	PC
11/6/01	NHL Hitz	Midway	GC
11/6/01	Planet Monster	Titus	GBA
11/6/01	Spyro: Seasons of Ice	Vivendi Universal	GBA
11/6/01	Super Bust-A-Move	Ubi Soft	GBA
11/6/01	Super Monkey Ball	Sega	GC
11/6/01	Tennis Masters Series	Titus	PC
11/7/01	Capcom Vs. SNK 2	Capcom	PS2
11/7/01	Cubix Robots For Everyone: Race n' Robots	3DO Company, The	PS2
11/7/01	Mega Man Xtreme 2	Capcom	GBC
11/7/01	Sponge Bob Square Pants Super Sponge	THQ	GBA
11/8/01	Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda Softworks	Xbox
11/8/01	Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda Softworks	PC
11/8/01	Fuzion Frenzy	Microsoft	Xbox
11/8/01	Halo	Microsoft	Xbox
11/8/01	NFL Fever 2002	Microsoft	Xbox
11/8/01	Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee	Microsoft	Xbox
11/8/01	Project Gotham Racing	Microsoft	Xbox
11/8/01	Star Wars Starfighter Special Edition	LucasArts	Xbox
11/9/01	Arctic Thunder	Midway	Xbox
11/9/01	Mega Race 3	Dreamcatcher	PC
11/9/01	Powerpuff Girls Mojo Jojo A-Go-Go	Bam! Entertainment	GBA
11/12/01	Dark Summit	THQ	PS2
11/12/01	Eve of Extinction	Eidos	PS2
11/12/01	Golden Sun	Nintendo	GBA
11/12/01	Hot Wheels: Burnin' Rubber	THQ	GBA
11/12/01	Kabuki Warriors	Crave	Xbox
11/12/01	Moto GP	THQ	GBA
11/12/01	MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	Xbox
11/12/01	No Rules Get Phat	TDK Mediactive	GBA
11/12/01	Star Wars: Galactic Battleground	LucasArts	PC
11/12/01	UFC: Tapout	Crave	Xbox
11/12/01	WWF Road to WrestleMania X	THQ	GBA
11/13/01	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Activision	GBA
11/13/01	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	Konami	PS2
11/13/01	NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony	PS2
11/13/01	NFL GameDay 2002	Sony	PS2
11/13/01	Nightcaster	Microsoft	Xbox
11/13/01	O.R.B.	Infogrames	PC
11/13/01	Rainbow Six: Ghost Recon	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
11/13/01	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Activision	PC
11/13/01	Return to Castle Wolfenstein Collector's Edition	Activision	PC
11/13/01	Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	PS2
11/13/01	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	GBC
11/13/01	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	PS2
11/13/01	Simpsons Road Rage	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/13/01	Simpsons Road Rage	Electronic Arts	Xbox
11/13/01	Splashdown	Infogrames	PS2
11/13/01	SSX Tricky	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/13/01	Star Trek: Armada II	Activision	PC
11/13/01	Survivor: The Interactive Game	WizardWorks	PC
11/13/01	The Sims: Hot Date Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	PC
11/13/01	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	GBC
11/13/01	Transworld Surfing	Infogrames	Xbox
11/13/01	Wave Rally	Eidos	PS2
11/13/01	World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	PS2
11/14/01	Breath of Fire	Capcom	GBA

JAMES BOND 007 IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13



Although it didn't make our E3 Best of Show list, Agent Under Fire made a big impression among the GI staff, and what our appetite for more details on this upcoming blockbuster. The storied Bond legacy, built on such masterpieces as GoldenEye and The World Is Not Enough, comes with a lot of expectations from the gaming public. Fortunately for us, Agent Under Fire should deliver the top drawer first-person action we've come to expect, while adding some well-done driving action to the mix.

Release Date	Title	Publisher/ Distributor	System
10/22/01	Black Moon Chronicles	Dreamcatcher	PC
10/22/01	Prehistoric Man	Titus	GBA
10/22/01	Tetris Worlds	THQ	PC
10/22/01	Top Gun: Firestorm	Titus	GBC
10/23/01	Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	Namco	PS2
10/23/01	Alien vs. Predator 2	Vivendi Universal	PC
10/23/01	Backyard Basketball	Infogrames	PC
10/23/01	Commanche 4	Electronic Arts	PC
10/23/01	Conflict Zone	Ubi Soft	DC
10/23/01	Disney's Monsters, Inc. Junior Game	Disney Interactive	PC
10/23/01	Doom	Activision	GBA
10/23/01	Dragon Warrior VII	Enix	PS-X
10/23/01	Elite Forces	Infogrames	PC
10/23/01	Monsters, Inc.	THQ	DC
10/23/01	NBA 2K2	Sega	DC
10/23/01	Secret Service: In Harm's Way	Activision	PC
10/23/01	Stronghold	Gathering of Developers	PC
10/23/01	Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubi Soft	PS2
10/23/01	The Role Playing Game Experience	Interplay	PC
10/23/01	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X	Activision	Xbox
10/23/01	Victorious Boxers	Vivendi Universal	PS2
10/23/01	World Tennis 2K2	Sega	DC
10/24/01	4x4 Evolution 2	Gathering of Developers	PC
10/24/01	4x4 Evolution 2	Take 2	Xbox
10/24/01	Ricky Clubhouse Fun	Vivendi Universal	GBC
10/24/01	Max Payne	Take 2	Xbox
10/24/01	Mega Man Battle Network	Capcom	GBA
10/24/01	Power Rangers Time Force	THQ	PS-X
10/24/01	Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo Revival	Capcom	GBA
10/25/01	Asheron's Call: Dark Majesty Expansion Pack	Microsoft	PC
10/25/01	Bicycle Board Games 1.5	Microsoft	PC
10/25/01	Bicycle Casino 1.5	Microsoft	PC
10/25/01	Dune	Dreamcatcher	PS2
10/25/01	Games Action Adventure Pack 1.1.0	Microsoft	PC
10/25/01	Racing Madness 2	Microsoft	PC
10/26/01	Beyond Atlantis 2	Dreamcatcher	PC
10/26/01	Rally Trophy	Micro Plan	PC
10/26/01	Stunt GP	Titus	PS2
10/29/01	Half-Life	Vivendi Universal	PS2
10/29/01	Max Payne	Take 2	PS2
10/29/01	Myth II: The Wolf Age	Talonsoft	PC
10/29/01	Smugglers Run 2: Hostile Territory	Take 2	PS2
10/30/01	Air Force Delta Storm	Konami	Xbox
10/30/01	Alcatraz	Activision	PC
10/30/01	American Bass Challenge	Ubi Soft	GBA
10/30/01	Batman: Vengeance	Ubi Soft	GBA
10/30/01	Beach Head 2002	WizardWorks	PC
10/30/01	Cel Damage	Electronic Arts	Xbox
10/30/01	Civilization III	Firaxis Games	PC
10/30/01	Civilization III: Collector's Tin	Infogrames	PC
10/30/01	Conflict Zone: Peacemakers	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
10/30/01	Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	Vivendi Universal	PS2
10/30/01	Dukoupan	AMI	GBA
10/30/01	Drakan II	Sony	PS2
10/30/01	ESPN NFL PrimeTime	Konami	PS2
10/30/01	FIFA Soccer 2002	Electronic Arts	PC
10/30/01	FIFA: Road to FIFA World Cup	Electronic Arts	PS-X
10/30/01	Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubi Soft	PS2
10/30/01	Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	GC
10/30/01	Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	Xbox
10/30/01	Majestic Online	Electronic Arts	PC
10/30/01	Monsters, Inc.	Sony	PS-X
10/30/01	MX Rider	Infogrames	PS2
10/30/01	NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	Xbox
10/30/01	NFL 2K2	Sega	PS2
10/30/01	Pajama Sam: Games to Play Any Day	Infogrames	PC
10/30/01	Silent Hunter II	UbiSoft	PC
10/30/01	Test Drive Off-Road	Infogrames	Xbox
10/30/01	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	PS-X
10/30/01	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	PS2
10/30/01	WWF Smackdown: Just Bring It	THQ	PS2
11/13/01	18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	PS2
11/13/01	Adventure Pinball: Forgotten Island	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/13/01	Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding	Microsoft	Xbox
11/13/01	Bear in the Big Blue House	Ubi Soft	PS-X
11/13/01	Casper	Titus	GBA
11/13/01	Deus EX: The Conspiracy	Eidos	PS2
11/13/01	Disney's Donald Duck Adventures	Ubi Soft	GBA
11/13/01	Empire Earth	Vivendi Universal	PC
11/13/01	GoGo: Elemental Force	3DO Company, The	PS2
11/13/01	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	Electronic Arts	GBA
11/13/01	Harvest Moon 3	Crave	GBC
11/13/01	James Bond 007 in... Agent Under Fire	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/13/01	Jeremy McGrath's Supercross World	Acclaim	PS2
11/13/01	Legion: Legend of Excalibur	Midway	PS2
11/13/01	Mary-Kate & Ashley: Crush Course	Acclaim	GBC

JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY

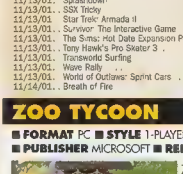
■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM
■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 11

Painstakingly modeled from hand-drawn blueprints, the first things that grabs your attention are the environments, which contain an unprecedented level of detail and ambient life. Unlike 3D platformers of the past, which largely featured barren plains, J&D teems with fully animated flora and fauna. Naughty Dog claims that each environment is made up of 4 to 6 million polygons; and it shows. No platformer to date has worlds that even hold a candle to these, kiddies.

Release Date	Title	Publisher/ Distributor	System
11/13/01	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Activision	GBA
11/13/01	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	Konami	PS2
11/13/01	NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony	PS2
11/13/01	NFL GameDay 2002	Sony	PS2
11/13/01	Nightcaster	Microsoft	Xbox
11/13/01	O.R.B.	Infogrames	PC
11/13/01	Rainbow Six: Ghost Recon	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
11/13/01	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Activision	PC
11/13/01	Return to Castle Wolfenstein Collector's Edition	Activision	PC
11/13/01	Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	PS2
11/13/01	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	GBC
11/13/01	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	PS2
11/13/01	Simpsons Road Rage	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/13/01	Simpsons Road Rage	Electronic Arts	Xbox
11/13/01	Splashdown	Infogrames	PS2
11/13/01	SSX Tricky	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/13/01	Star Trek: Armada II	Activision	PC
11/13/01	Survivor: The Interactive Game	WizardWorks	PC
11/13/01	The Sims: Hot Date Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	PC
11/13/01	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	GBC
11/13/01	Transworld Surfing	Infogrames	Xbox
11/13/01	Wave Rally	Eidos	PS2
11/13/01	World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	PS2
11/14/01	Breath of Fire	Capcom	GBA
11/15/01	Aerie Aces	Majesco	GBA
11/15/01	Arc the Lad: Collection	Working Designs	PS-X
11/15/01	Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	PS2
11/15/01	Dave Stars	Vivendi Universal	GBC
11/15/01	Flight Simulator 2002 Pro	Microsoft	PC
11/15/01	Flight Simulator 2002 Standard	Microsoft	PC
11/15/01	Grand Theft Auto 3	Destination Software	GBA
11/15/01	New Legends	THQ	Xbox
11/15/01	Over the Top Soccer	Sega	DC
11/15/01	Resident Evil: Survivor 2 Code Veronica	Capcom	PS2
11/15/01	Woody Woodpecker	Dreamcatcher	PS2
11/16/01	Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp	Digital Leisure	PC
11/16/01	Industry Tycoon 2	Navarre	PC
11/16/01	LEGO Racers II	Lego Media	GBA
11/19/01	ESPN Great Outdoor Games: Bass Fishing 2002	Konami	GBA
11/19/01	Frogger's Adventures: Temple of the Frog	Konami	GBA
11/19/01	Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	PS2
11/19/01	Jurassic Park III: Island Attack	Konami	GBA
11/19/01	Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	PS2
11/19/01	Luigi's Mansion	Nintendo	GC
11/19/01	Wario Land 4	Nintendo	GBA
11/20/01	Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	PS2
11/20/01	FIFA Soccer 2002	Electronic Arts	GC
11/20/01	Free Wheelin' USA	UbiSoft	PC
11/20/01	Frequency	Sony	PS2
11/20/01	Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	PS2
11/20/01	IL 2: Sturmovik	UbiSoft	PC
11/20/01	Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2	Eidos	Xbox
11/20/01	LEGO Bionicle	Lego Media	PC
11/20/01	Moto Racer 3	Infogrames	PC
11/20/01	Planet of the Apes	Ubi Soft	GBA
11/20/01	Shifters	3DO Company, The	PS2
11/21/01	Cubix Robots For Everyone: Race n' Robots	3DO Company, The	GBC
11/21/01	Zorro	Dreamcatcher	PS2
11/22/01	Megaman 3	Dreamcatcher	PS2
11/27/01	Azurik: Rise of Perathia	Microsoft	Xbox
11/27/01	Combat	Infogrames	PC
11/27/01	Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	PS2
11/27/01	Evil Twin	Ubi Soft	PC
11/27/01	Evil Twin: Cyperion Chronicles	Ubi Soft	PS2
11/27/01	Conquer Kingdom	Namco	PS2
11/27/01	Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	GBA
11/27/01	NBA 2K2	Sega	PS2
11/27/01	NFL 2K2	Sega	Xbox
11/27/01	Police 911	Konami	PS2
11/27 01	Twisted Metal: Small Brawl	Sony	PS-X
11 30/01	Freelancer	Microsoft	PC
11 30/01	Tennis Worlds	THQ	PS2
12/3/01	Atari Anniversary Edition	Infogrames	PS-X
12 3 01	Blood Wake	Microsoft	Xbox
12 3 01	Clubs Robots for Everyone: Race n' Robots	3DO	PC
12/3/01	Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO Company, The	PS2
12/3/01	Monster Rancher Advanced	Tecmo	GBA
12/3/01	NFL Blitz 2002	Midway	PS2
12/3/01	NFL QB Club 2002	Acclaim	GC
12/3/01	Pikmin	Nintendo	GC
12/3/01	Powerpuff Girls	Bam! Entertainment	PS2
12/3/01	Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	Ubi Soft	PS2
12/3/01	Star Wars Episode I: Jedi Power Battles	THQ	GBA
12 3/01	Star Wars: Obi-Wan	LucasArts	Xbox
12 3/01	WWF Raw is War	THQ	Xbox
12/3/01	You Don't Know Jack Vol. 6	Vivendi Universal	PS-X
12/4/01	Batman: Vengeance	Ubi Soft	Xbox
12/4/01	Columns Crown	Sega	GBA
12/4/01	Dune	Dreamcatcher	PC
12/4/01	Grandia II	UbiSoft	PC
12/4/01	Grandia II	Ubi Soft	PS2
12/4/01	Hidden Invasion	Crave	PS2
12/4/01	NBA Live 2002	Electronic Arts	Xbox
12/4/01	Rayman Arena	UbiSoft	PC
12/4/01	Rayman Arena	Ubi Soft	PS2
12/4/01	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	GBA
12/4/01	Shenmue 2	Sega	DC
12/4/01	SSX Tricky	Electronic Arts	GC

ZOO TYCOON

■ **FORMAT** PC ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY
■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 18



Zoo Tycoon allows the player to do just about anything he or she desires. The controls are simple, almost duplicating the schematic used in Roller Coaster Tycoon, and the micromanaging options are some of the deepest we've seen. Almost every species on the planet is represented with authentic behaviors and emotions. If the animals like their cage, they may reproduce, or live longer than expected – but as we've illustrated, if you don't like any of that, there are ways around it.

PLAY TO PERFECTION

This list took ages to compile. Not featured are the monsters that require research in Lost Data. Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore will unlock one of these mystical creatures, but you'll need to complete the game and talk to rival trainers to figure out how to make this monster available. Out of the dics we tested, DVD movies and PlayStation 2 games unlocked the highest level of rare monsters. We really didn't get much from PlayStation games or music CDs. We hope this list comes in handy. Enjoy!

Actopee
American Beauty (DVD)

Angel
City of Angels (DVD), Mallrats (DVD)

Anubis
The Astronaut's Wife (DVD), Asteroids (PS-X)

Armadiroller
Beyond the Mat (DVD), Gone in 60 Seconds (DVD), Star Trek II (DVD)

Aspis
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream (PS2), The Thomas Crown Affair (DVD)

Avalanche
Close Encounters of the Third Kind Disc 1 (DVD), The Mask of Zorro (DVD)

Bakki
Detroit Rock City (DVD), Gladiator Disc 2 (DVD), Final Fantasy IX Disc 2 (PS-X)

Baliroller
Moto GP (PS2), Driver 2 (PS-X)

Bambiimew
Unbreakable Disc 1 (DVD)

Baum
The Bouncer (PS2)

Beaklon
Driving Emotion Type-S (PS2), Mystery, Alaska (DVD), NHL 2001 (PS2)

Bearroller
The Siege (DVD)

Bercougar
Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (DVD)

Blizzarin
The World is Not Enough (DVD), Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge (PS2)

Cabaree
Gallop Racer 2001 (PS2)
A Rank Required

Cactun
Evangelion Vol 5 (DVD)

Cantalos
Starship Troopers (DVD)

Carame
The 13th Warrior (DVD)

Coconut
Gladiator Disc 1 (DVD), Chasing Amy (DVD)

Colorpandora
City Crisis (PS2), Lethal Weapon 4 (DVD), NBA Street (PS2), Rune: Viking Warlord (PS2), Final Fantasy IX Disc 1 (PS-X)

Dark Bringer
Clerks (DVD)

Dakkung
Dark Cloud (PS2), NCAA Football 2002 (PS2), Office Space (DVD), Beast Wars (PS-X), Bust-A-Groove (PS-X), Carnage Heart (PS-X)

Dokkung
Austin Powers (DVD)

Dragon
American Movie (DVD), Rushmore (DVD), Joe Dirt (DVD), Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers (PS2), High Heat 2002 (PS2)
A Rank Required

Drydon
Kingpin (DVD)
A Rank Required

Durahan
RC Revenge Pro (PS2), Heroes of Might and Magic: Quest for the Dragon Bone Staff (PS2), Red Faction (PS2) *A Rank Required*

Eeda
Princess Bride (DVD)

Eggukkung
Chicken Run (DVD)

Elebus
Close Encounters of the Third Kind Disc 2 (DVD), Eye of the Beholder (DVD), Saving Grace (DVD)

Electrieel
Tomorrow Never Dies: Special Edition (DVD), You've Got Mail (DVD)

Enki
Onimusha (PS2)
A Rank Required

Fantuger
Mulan (DVD), Final Fantasy VIII Disc 3 (PS-X)

Farn
Final Fantasy VIII Disc 1 (PS-X)

Fay
Blade Runner (DVD)

Fenril
Chrono Cross (PS-X)

Forestra
The Whole Nine Yards (DVD)
A Rank Required

Fukazo
Can't Hardly Wait (DVD), Jaws (DVD), Sky Odyssey (PS2)

Fukazukin
Time Traveler (DVD), Friends Disc 1 (DVD), The Wedding Planner (DVD)

Futorunner
Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec (PS2)

Gitan
Silent Scope (PS2), Friends Disc 2 (DVD), Frequency (DVD)

Golem A
The Iron Giant (DVD)

Golem B
Knockout Kings 2001 (PS2), Ridge Racer V (PS2), Star Trek: Generations (DVD), A Bug's Life (PS-X), Alundra 2 (PS-X), Driver (PS-X)

Grilief
Army Men: Air Attack 2 (PS2)

Hare
Wild Wild Racing (PS2), TimeSplitters (PS2), Saving Silverman (DVD), Crash Bandicoot: Warped (PS-X), Final Fantasy VII Disc 1 (PS-X)

Hengar
Armored Core 2 (PS2), F1 Championship (PS2), FIFA 2001 (PS2), Duece Bigalow (DVD), NHL Face Off 2001 (PS2), Romeo Must Die (DVD), Final Fantasy Anthology FFV (PS-X)

Highlander
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2 (PS2)
A Rank Required

Holstarin
Erin Brockovich (DVD)

Hothod
Free Tibet (DVD), Heavy Metal 2000 (DVD), Small Time Crooks (DVD), Star Trek III (DVD), U.S. Marshals (DVD)

Isobe
Spinal Tap (DVD)

Jell
ESPN International Track & Field (PS2), Ghostbusters (DVD), Go (DVD), Madden NFL 2002 (PS2),

Jiro
Evangelion Vol. 4 (DVD)

Kaio
Kessen (PS2)

Kero
Magnolia (DVD)

Kesshoka
Shanghai Noon (DVD)

Koloro
Bounce Disc 1 (DVD)

Konta
The Sixth Sense (DVD), X-Men (DVD)

Korodango
Star Trek: First Contact (DVD)

Kuloro
Highlander: End Game Disc 2 (DVD)

Kurincho
Twisted Metal: Black (PS2)
B Rank Required

Kyuza
Colony Wars Disc 2 (PS-X)

Lapislatel
Three to Tango (DVD)

Lemlaria
Rush Hour (DVD)

Lesione
EdTV (DVD), Midnight Club (PS2), Crash Bandicoot (PS-X), Final Fantasy Chronicles: Chrono Trigger (PS-X)

Lulu
Mission Impossible 2 (DVD), Titan A.E. (DVD)

Maharajan
The Prince of Egypt (DVD)

Marshmallow
Die Hard (DVD)

Merman
Pecker (DVD)

Metanix
SSX (PS2)

Mew
Quake III: Revolution (PS2), Triple Play Baseball (PS2), Theme Park Roller Coaster (PS2), The Road Warrior (DVD)

Mewkiri
Buster Bros. Collection (PS-X)

Mewsneak
Charlie's Angels (DVD)

Mocchi
Gradius III and IV (PS2), Gungriffon Blaze (PS2), Test Drive Off-Road Wide Open (PS2), Super Bust-A-Move (PS2), Snatch (DVD)

Mogi
The Ghost and the Darkness (DVD), Ring of Red (PS2), Star Trek: Insurrection (DVD), Blade (PS-X)

Momo
All-Star Baseball 2002 (PS2), Crazy Taxi (PS2), Unreal Tournament (PS2)

Mose
Dino Crisis 2 (PS-X)

Munlee
Ronin (DVD)

Naga
Gattaca (DVD), Little Nicky (DVD), Chocobo Racing (PS-X), Die Hard Trilogy 2 (PS-X)

Nymph
Final Fantasy VIII Disc 4 (PS-X)

Octomee
Dragon's Lair (DVD)

Octopee
Escape From Monkey Island (PS2), Wonder Boys (DVD), Traffic (DVD)

Offshore
The General's Daughter (DVD), Summoner (PS2)

Ogyo
Dark City (DVD), NBA Hoopz (PS2), Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2 (PS2), Crash Team Racing (PS-X), Final Fantasy Chronicles FF IV (PS-X), Final Fantasy VII Disc 2 (PS-X)

Oltan
Drowning Mona (DVD)

Ootan
Dynasty Warriors 2 (PS2)

Palasaulo
Dinosaur (DVD), Mission to Mars (DVD), Princess Mononoke (DVD), Saving Private Ryan (DVD),

Pancho
Star Wars: Starfighter (PS2)
B Rank Required

Panko
Gauntlet Dark Legacy (PS2)

Pashminer
Drop Dead Gorgeous (DVD)

Peligoon
Antz (DVD), Star Trek IV (DVD)

Pepe
Pushing Tin (DVD), Unbreakable Disc 2 (DVD), Cool Boarders 2 (PS-X)

Petraden
Monster Rancher 2 (PS-X)

Phowou
Ephemeral Fantasia (PS2)

Pixie
A Perfect Murder (DVD), Bounce Disc 2 (DVD), Die Hard 2 (DVD), MDK 2: Armageddon (PS2), NBA Shoot Out 2001 (PS2), Oni (PS2)

Plant
American History X (DVD), Assault: Retribution (PS-X), Ape Escape (PS-X), Dino Crisis (PS-X)

Psiroller
MX 2002 featuring Ricky Carmichael (PS2), Command & Conquer: Red Alert Retaliation (PS-X), Evil Zone (PS-X)

Rabbiroller
Alien Resurrection (DVD)

Raiden
Aqua Aqua (PS2), Arlington Road (DVD), Breath of Fire IV (PS-X), Final Fantasy IX Disc 4 (PS-X)

Raipenpenn
The 6th Day (DVD)

Ruby
Best In Show (DVD)

Ryozan
Mighty Joe Young (DVD)

Saboran
Baseketball (DVD), Star Trek V (DVD)

Scissors
The Abyss: Special Edition Disc 1 (DVD), The Mexican (DVD), The Patriot (DVD)

Scurfy
Girl, Interrupted (DVD), Gun Shy (DVD)

Shelluncho
The Way of the Gun (DVD), Cast Away (DVD)
B Rank Required

Shironcho
Dragon's Lair II: Timewarp (DVD)
B Rank Required

Skullwave
Nurse Betty (DVD)

Spearmint
Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker (DVD), Election (DVD), Motor Mayhem (PS2), Mystery Men (DVD)

Suezo
Cool Boarders 2001 (PS2), Extermination (PS2), Star Trek VI (DVD), Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back (PS-X)

Sumocchi
Street Fighter EX 3 (PS2), Tekken Tag Tournament (PS2)

Suzurin
Bloody Roar 3 (PS2), A Life Less Ordinary (DVD), Final Fantasy Anthology: FFVI (PS-X)

Tanuzo
Disney's Tarzan (DVD)

Tiger
Army Men: Green Rogue (PS2), ESPN MLS ExtraTime (PS2), Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing (PS2), Final Fantasy IX Disc 3 (PS-X), Final Fantasy Tactics (PS-X)

Tigon
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (DVD)
A Rank Required

Tornado
Any Given Sunday (DVD)

Tortboy
12 Monkeys (DVD), A Bug's Life (DVD), Almost Famous (DVD), Alien Legacy 1-3 (DVD), Josie & the Pussycats (DVD), Jurassic Park (DVD), The Perfect Storm (DVD)

Tsuboncho
Boiler Room (DVD), Freestyle Boardin' '99 (PS-X)
B Rank Required

Viper
Apocalypse (PS-X)

Vivaroller
Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me (DVD), The Green Mile (DVD)

Vulcan
Galaxy Quest (DVD)

Wakkung
Bowfinger (DVD), The Insider (DVD)

Windine
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil (PS2), Rayman 2: Revolution (PS2), Some Like It Hot (DVD), Final Fantasy VIII Disc 2 (PS-X)

Yuppee
Deep Impact (DVD), Shadow of Destiny (PS2)

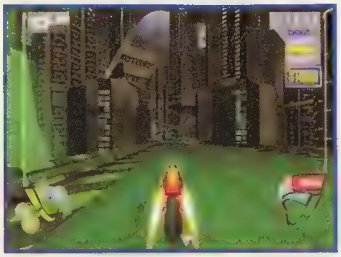
Zaratan
Sleepy Hollow (DVD)
A Rank Required

Zaza
The Ladies Man (DVD), Orphen: Scion of Sorcery (PS2), Payback (DVD)

Zoom
CART Fury: Championship Racing (PS2), Fantavision (PS2), Activision Classic Games (PS-X), Blasto (PS-X), Final Fantasy VII Disc 3 (PS-X)

SECRET ACCESS

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2



Extreme G3

Enter all of these cheats at the Main Menu. When these codes are entered correctly, a message will appear.

All Tracks – L1 (x2), L2 (x2), R2 (x2), R1 (x2), L1 + R1 + L2 + R2
Automatically Win – L1 + R1 + L2 + R2, L2 + R2, R1 + R2, L1 + R1 + L2 + R2
Double Prize Money – L1, L2, R2, R1 (x2), R2, L2, L1
Extreme Lap Challenge – L1, L2, L1, R1, L1, R2, L1 + R1, L2 + R2
Free Money – L1 (x5), L2 (x5), R1 (x5), R2 (x5), L1 + L2 + R1 + R2
Infinite Ammo – L2, R2, L1, R1, L2 + R2, L1 + R1
Infinite Shields – L1 + R1, L2 + R2, L1 + L2, R1 + R2

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH

Madden NFL 2002

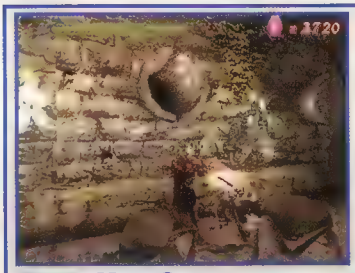
Unlimited Madden Cards Tokens – Enter the Options menu, then select Rosters. Choose any team you'd like, then scroll to Edit Player and set all of the defensive players Speed attributes to 15. Now, select the team you'd like to play as and change all of the HB, FB, TE, and backup WR's overall attributes to 10 or less. Change all of the starting WR's catching and carrying to 15. Leave the rest of their attributes be. Change all of the QB ThrowAcc and ThrowPower to 15. For the starting quarterback, change the Speed, Carrying, Awareness, Accel, Agility, and Stamina to 99. Lastly, set your entire offensive lines PassBlk and RunBlk to 99. From here, enter a Two Minute Drill and select the teams you just altered. Set the difficulty to All Madden, then find a pass play that works. This may take some time since your quarterback can't throw downfield and your receivers will only catch one out of ten balls. When a catch is made you should have no problem scoring a touchdown. Repeat this process until your total score shows a negative number. Your final score at the end of the drill won't show the negative figure – yet once you go to the Madden Cards screen, you'll have well over 10 million tokens to spend.

"PlayStation Paul"
Pepper Lake City, UT

Arctic Thunder

Expert Mode – ○, □, ○ (x2), □, Start
No Drones Mode – □ (x2), ○ (x2), L1, R1, Start

Timothy Stevenson
Pittsburgh, PA



Devil May Cry

As promised, here are all the locations and strategies for the 12 Secret Missions.

Secret Mission 1 (Mission 3)
After defeating the boss, return to the bridge and drop down to activate this bonus stage. To accomplish this task, you'll need full demon power to successfully deliver a critical blow to this spectre. So instead of blowing your wad on the boss, save your power. You shouldn't need much health to destroy this beastie in one fluid shot. Two shotgun blasts will work as well.

Secret Mission 2 (Mission 4)
Pass through the mural that held the Alastor Sword. To successfully kill 100 of these critters, use your sword and comb the three bug groupings.

Secret Mission 3 (Mission 4)
Head to the hallway then enter the power-up room to trigger this stage. To rack up 100 kills here, simply walk over the bugs. If you use your gun or sword, they'll run away.

Secret Mission 4 (Mission 4)
After defeating the shadow dog, return to the room directly below the airplane. To achieve success, hack away at the core-revealed shadows. The auto-targeting will automatically lock-on to other beasts, so stay focused!

Secret Mission 5 (Mission 7)
After the scorpion encounter, re-enter the Rusty Key room. Originally, we believed that you must destroy these beasts with critical hits. This is not the case, however. All you have to do is let one of the spiders kill the other.

Secret Mission 6 (Mission 11)
Enter the wooden door next to the well to activate this bonus game. Instead of combating the spectre populace, you'll need to find a way to get the Blue Orb dangling in the sky. Even with the Air Hike, you cannot jump high enough. Bounce off of the spectre heads repeatedly to elevate to its location.

Secret Mission 7 (Post-Mission 13)
When you clean out the level, return to the Captain's skeleton in the Ghost Ship and the minigame will appear. This one is easy. Just take down all eight adversaries with the Needle Gun.

Secret Mission 8 (Mission 15)
Re-enter the roving spike room from Mission 14. Check the picture on the wall to start this mission. Once again, you'll need to take out three shadow dogs. If you have the Nightmare gun, its rebound factors will help.

Secret Mission 9 (Mission 16)
After Nightmare falls, return to the airplane room. The goal here is to take out four shadow dogs. The trick is, thought, that they are hidden. Two of them are in the airplane room. Another one resides in the hallway. The last one is in the bridge room.

Secret Mission 10 (Mission 16)
Once Secret Mission 9 is complete, maneuver to the coliseum. To get the Orb, your patience will now be tested, rather than your skill. Navigate the narrow platforms to the Orb location.

Secret Mission 11 (Mission 17)
Activating this stage is nearly impossible. You'll only get one chance at it. Head to the broken bridge, and maneuver from the platform toward the door. If you fall off, you fail. Time your jumps, and hit solid land to begin. To snag the Blue Orb Sliver, use the jump pads that the Death Scythe projects. Once again, if you fall in the water, the mission is over.

Secret Mission 12 (Mission 21)
Access the hidden door opposite the Time Statue. Cross the road and snag the Blue Orb Sliver. At the end of the road, a dragon awaits – just like the dino you knocked fireballs at. This time, he doesn't spit anything. You'll need to whack it in the head with your swords. Gun fire doesn't work, however. If you can get into a groove and keep him at bay, he'll eventually die. Sadly, two small dinos will appear. Defeat them, then jump to the highly coveted Time Bracelet!

"The GI Staff"
Minneapolis, MN

Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo

Paint Shop – Within Tactics battle mode, go to the Gundam Suit selection screen and simultaneously press and hold either L1, L2, and ✕ or R1, R2, and ✕ to change the color of your suit.

David O'Connor
Webville, COM

Silent Scope 2: Dark Silhouette

Enter both of these codes from the in-game pause screen. If you look at the tinted background after you enter the code, you'll see the time and health change.

Exchange Health for Time – Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, ✕, ○
Exchange Time for Health – ○, ✕, Right, Left, Right, Left, Down (x2), Up (x2)

Jason Hughes
Golden Valley, ID

SSX

Enter all of these codes at the Options screen.

All Course Hints – Simultaneously press and hold L1, L2, R1, and R2. With this combo held, tap ○, ✕, ○, ✕, ○, ✕, ○, ✕. This cheat allows you to view all course hints before racing.

Mallora Board – Simultaneously press and hold L1, L2, R1, and R2. With this combo held, tap ○ (x5), ✕, △, □.

Master Cheat – Simultaneously press and hold L1, L2, R1, and R2. With this combo held, tap ✕, ○, △, □. This will open up all of the characters and courses.

Max Stats – Simultaneously press and hold L1, L2, R1, and R2. With this combo held, tap ○ (x7), □. When you start a race, you character will be fully juiced.

Running Man Mode – Simultaneously press and hold L1, L2, R1, and R2. With this combo held, tap □, △, ○, ✕, □, △, ○, ✕. As the name implies, your character will run down the hill with the board fastened to his or her back.

"Scarecrow"
Burnt Hills, NY

NASCAR Heat

Disable Strict Mode (Beat-the-Heat) – At the Main Menu, press Up, Down, Left, Right, R1, Left, Right. With this code on, walls may freely be hit.
Hardcore Mode – At the Main Menu, press Up, Down, Left, Right, R1, Up, Down.
Hide Replay Overlay – At the Main Menu, press Up, Down, Left, Right, R1, Down, Up. Now, when a replay is shown, hit ○ to hide the menus.
Hornball Mode – At the Race Day screen in single or head-to-head competition, press Up, Down, Left, Right, R1, Up (x2). From here, press ○ to shoot tires.
Hornball Mode 2 – At the Race Day screen in Practice mode, press Up, Down, Left, Right, R1, Down (x2). From here, press Up to shoot tires.

"Daddy Fat Sacks"
Memphis, TN

Resident Evil Code: Veronica X

Battle Mode – Simply complete the game on any of the difficulty settings. Return to the Main Menu to enter this action-packed mode.

Claire New Outfit – Achieve a high rating in Battle mode with Claire Redfield to unlock an alternate version of her outfit.

Linear Launcher – Achieve an A ranking in Battle mode with Chris, Wesker, Steve, and both versions of Claire.

Rocket Launcher – Achieve an A ranking in the game. To do this you'll need to avoid saving, not use any first aid sprays, never continue, save Steve from the Luger, supply medicine to Rodrigo, and finish the game in under four hours. After accomplishing these feats, start a new game. A Rocket Launcher will be waiting for you in the first item box.

Wesker & Steve – Achieve a high rating in Battle mode with Chris Redfield to unlock Steve, then do it again to unlock Wesker.

Chelise Mclearn
Boston, MA

High Heat Major League Baseball 2002

Taunt & Charge the Mound – When a batter gets nailed by a pitch, hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2. When you do this your batter will approach the mound, taunting the pitcher. Continue holding this combo, then hit ✕ to make your batter charge.

"The Vidman"
Uptown, MN

Le Mans 24 Hours

Enter all of these codes as a Championship mode name, then return to the Main Menu to activate the cheat. When you finish, back out through the menus to access the codes.

All Cars – ACO
All Championships – NUMBAT
All Tracks – SPEEDY
Credits – HEINEY
Le Mans Mode – WOMBAT

"GI Droid"
(location unknown – last seen rubbing baby powder on his exhaust pipe)

CODE OF THE MONTH

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2

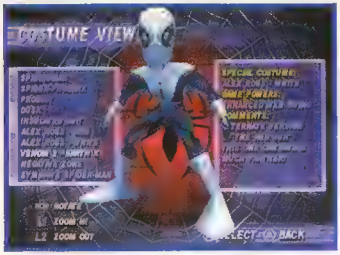
Enter all of these codes at the Main Menu. You'll hear a snapping sound when the cheat is inputted correctly.

Characters & Bikes
All Bikes – Up, Left, Down, Right, Down (x2), Right, Down (x2), Left, □
Amish Boy – Up, Left, Down, Right (x2), Left (x2), Down, Up, Left, □
Mike Dias – Up, Left, Down, Right (x2), Left, Up, Down, Up, Right, □

Outfits & FMVs
Colin Mackey Outfit – Up, Down, Right, Down, Up, Right (x2), Up, □
Colin Mackey FMV – Left (x2), Right (x2), Down (x2), Right, Up, □
Dave Mirra Outfit – Up, Down, Up, Down, Right, Left, Up (x2), □
Dave Mirra FMV – Left (x2), Up, Right, Up, Left, Up (x2), □
Joey Garcia Outfit – Up, Down, Up, Left, Down, Right, Down, Right, □
Joey Garcia FMV – Left (x2), Up (x2), Down, Right, Down, □
Kenan Harkin FMV – Left (x4), Right (x2), Down (x2), □
Leigh Ramsdell Outfit – Up, Down (x2), Left, Down (x3), Left, □
Leigh Ramsdell FMV – Left (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Down, Left, □
Luc-E Outfit – Up, Down, Left, Down, Left, Right, Left (x2), □
Luc-E FMV – Left (x2), Right (x2), Down (x2), Right, Up, □
Mike Laird FMV – Left (x2), Right, Up (x2), Right, Up, Right, □
Rick Moliterno Outfit – Up, Down, Up (x4), Left, Up, □
Rick Moliterno FMV – Left (x2), Up, Down, Right, Left (x2), Up, □
Ryan Nyquist Outfit – Up, Down (x2), Left, Down, Up (x2), Down, □
Ryan Nyquist FMV – Left (x2), Down, Right, Down, Right, Up, Down, □
Scott Wirch FMV – Left (x2), Right, Up (x3), Left, Right, □
Tim Mirra Outfit – Up, Down, Right, Left (x2), Up, Down, Up, □
Tim Mirra FMV – Left (x2), Right, Up, Down, Left, Down, Up, □
Todd Lyons Outfit – Up, Down (x2), Right, Up, Left (x2), Down, □
Todd Lyons FMV – Left (x2), Down, Up (x2), Right, Left, Down, □
Troy McMurray Outfit – Up, Down, Left, Down, Right, Left, Up, Left, □
Troy McMurray FMV – Left (x3), Down, Up, Right, Up, Left, □
Zach Shaw Outfit – Up, Down, Left, Right, Down (x2), Right, Down, □
Zach Shaw FMV – Left (x3), Right, Left, Down, Right, Down, □

Chan Yoo
Oakland, CA

PLAYSTATION



Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro

Enter the Special menu, then input the codes you desire into the Cheats screen.

All Levels – NONJYMNT
Big Feet – STACEYD
Big Heads – ALIEN
Debug Mode – DRILHERE
Gallery – DRKROOM
Training Complete – CEREBRA
Unlock Everything – AUNTMAY
What If – VVISIONS

Meagan Hunt
Atlanta, GA

NINTENDO 64

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

To enter these codes, begin a game, pause, then input the desired code from the listing below.

10x Multiplier – Hold the L Button, the press Down C (x4), Left C, Right C, Right.
Free Flight – Hold the L Button, the press Right, Up, Down C, Up C, Down C, Left C (x2).
Full Special Meter – Hold the L Button, the press Left C, Down C, Up C, Right, Right C, Right.
Infinite Cash – Hold the L Button, the press Left C (x2), Up, Right C, Up C, Down.
Moon Physics – Hold the L Button, the press Down C, Left C, Right C, Left C, Up, Down C, Down, Right, Down C (x2).
Perfect Balance – Hold the L Button, the press Down C, Right, Down, Left C, Down C, Up C, Right C, Left C.
Raise Stats to 10 – Hold the L Button, the press Down, Up, Up C, Left C, Down, Up, Up C.
Raise Stats to 13 – Hold the L Button, the press Down C, Right C (x2), Up C, Up, Down, Right, Left.
Simulation Mode – Hold the L Button, the press Left, Right C, Right, Down, Down C, Up (x2).
Skip to Restart – Hold the L Button, the press Left C, Down C, Right C, Down Up C (x2).
Slow Motion Mode – Hold the L Button, the press Up C, Down, Left, Left C, Down C, Up C, Right C.
Turbo Mode – Hold the L Button, the press Down, Left, Up C, Down C, Left C, Right, Up.
Turbo Mode 2 – Hold the L Button, the press Left C, Down C, Up C, Down, Up, Right.

Thomas Howard
Sacramento, CA

DREAMCAST

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX

Enter all of these codes from the in-game pause screen.

Clean Pause – Hold the L Button, then simultaneously press X, Y, A, B.
Balance Meter – Hold the L Button, then press Left, B, X, Y, X, B, A.
Extra Time – Hold the L Button, then press X, Up, B, A.
Full Special – Hold the L Button, then press Left, Down, Y, B, Up, Left, Y, X.

Grandma – Simply begin a new game, then quickly reset ten times in a row. Doing this will bring up the message "You ride like a Grandma". When the game resumes, a lovely old lady will replace your character.

Jim Kirk
Austin, TX

Sonic Adventure 2

Boss Attack Mode – Complete either the Hero or Evil Story modes.

Dark Garden – Use any of the evil characters (Eggman, Shadow, Rogue) to raise a Chao. Eventually, your little loved one will transform into a cocoon. Once it hatches, stairs will appear in the lobby leading to the Dark Garden.

Dark Kart Racing – Complete Rogue's missions to unlock this minigame.

Hero Garden – Use any of the good characters (Sonic, Knuckles, Tails) to raise a Chao. Eventually, it will crawl into a cocoon. Once it hatches, stairs will appear in the lobby leading to the Hero Garden.

Hero Kart Racing – Complete Tails' driving quest to unlock this minigame.

Hyper Shadow – Complete Last Stage? to unlock this bad boy.

Last Stage? – Complete both Hero and Evil Story modes, then reenter Story mode to find a bonus mission.

Super Sonic – Complete Last Stage? to unlock this incredibly speedy hog.

Kenneth Brogman
Boston, MA

Giga Wing 2

Cheat Mode – Enter the Gallery menu, then quickly (we mean as quickly as you can) tap Up, X, Y, X, Down, Y, X, Y (x2) to unlock all of the planes and bonus options. When this code is entered correctly, a sound will ring out. Ding!

Jessie Camp
New York, NY

Sega Bass Fishing 2

Bonus Characters & Locations – Enter Tournament mode, and finish in first in the Tournaments to unlock new fishing locations and characters.

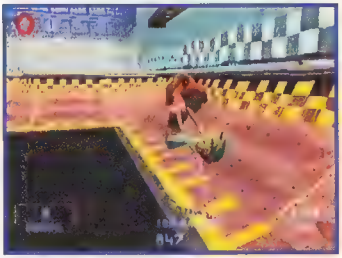
Hidden Lures – Enter Tournament mode and catch the biggest fish of the day. As a reward, you'll receive one of the many hidden lures.

"Dreamcast Davey"
Hannal Lake, ME

Worms World Party

Instantly Win – Rather than battling it out; simply input your team name as "winners". When a game starts, all of the opposing worms will perish.

Mark Wilhem
Grandio, WA



Razor Freestyle Scooter

To enter this code, begin a game, pause, then input the cheat below.

Cheat Mode – Hold the L Button, then press Right, Down, Right, Left, Right, Up, Right (x2) to unlock all of the goods.

Samantha Tador
Orlando, FL

18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker

Enter this code at the Main Menu.

Cheat Mode – Hold the L Button, then press A, Y, X, B, Left, Start to unlock all of the trucks, tracks, and timer options.

"8 of 9"
Webville, COM

PC PERSONAL COMPUTER

MAX PAYNE

Begin the game with the "-developerskeys" command line parameter. When gameplay commences, press F12 to bring up the console window. Now, simply press the key commands below to mess with the game. It's almost like you're the developer!

Cycle Cameras – C
Decrease Speed – [End]
External Camera Back – [Cursor Down]
External Camera Front – [Cursor Up]
External Camera Left – [Cursor Left]
External Camera Right – [Cursor Right]
Increase Speed – [Home]
Mesh Up – [Page Up]
Mesh Down – [Page Down]
Normal Speed – [Home] + [End]
Statistics – F11
Switch AI Movement Conn – F7
Switch AI Movement Node – F8
Teleport to Start – [Insert]
Teleport to Previous Start – [Delete]
Texture Setup Up – [Control] + [Page Up]
Texture Setup Down – [Control] + [Page Down]

"Monkey Boy"
Islama, HI

OPERATION FLASHPOINT: COLD WAR CRISIS

All Missions – At the Main Menu, hold [LEFT SHIFT], then tap [Keypad Minus]. When the console window appears, type in "campaign".

End Mission – During gameplay, hold [LEFT SHIFT], then tap [Keypad Minus]. When the console window appears, type in "endmission".

Instant Save – During gameplay, hold [LEFT SHIFT], then tap [Keypad Minus]. When the console window appears, type in "savegame".

Topography – During gameplay, hold [LEFT SHIFT], then tap [Keypad Minus]. When the console window appears, type in "topography".

Decan Davids
Webville, COM

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE DOMINION WARS

Increase Enemy Damage – Highlight an enemy ship and lock onto it. Now, simultaneously press [Control], [Shift], [Delete] to slowly increase the damage dealt.

Bill Shields
Barbed Wire, ID

GAME SHARK

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2

ESPN X-GAMES SKATEBOARDING

Master Code (Must Be Entered) –
ec8a17a014439b6c

All Boards –
7c1eee38144ee7a6
3d9882291456e7a5
4c1eee581456e6a6

Full Special Meter –
4d5297441456e6b9

PORTAL RUNNER

Master Code (Must Be On) –
ec84122014459340

Infinite Health –
4cbf416c1456e7b5

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X

Master Code (Must Be On) –
ec8533d01445d97c

Bonus Modes & Options –
4cd6b22C1456b00c

DREAMCAST

FLOIGAN BROS.

Master Code (Must Be Entered First) –
9c5d88f8

Master Code (Must Be Entered Last) –
245eeca9

999 Points (Hoigle) –
Df4acA08
000003e7

999 Points (Moigle) –
3f4efefb
000003e7

PLAYSTATION

SAIYUKI: JOURNEY WEST

Infinite Cash –
80137714 ffff

Infinite Hit Points (Dragon) –
8013722a 03e7

Infinite Hit Points (Gojo) –
8013706a 03ef

Infinite Hit Points (Goku) –
80136fc2 03e7

Infinite Hit Points (Great Ape) –
8013722a 03e7

Infinite Hit Points (Hakkai) –
80136ffa 03e7

Infinite Hit Points (Ryorin) –
80137032 03e7

Infinite Hit Points (Sanzo) –
80136f8a 03e7

Infinite Were Points –
300ebe44 0020

Max Were Level –
30137720 0063

GAME BOY COLOR

WWF BETRAYAL

Infinite Health –
914021c0

Infinite Lives –
910925c0

Max Move Meter –
910524c0

Single Hit Falls –
9300d1d8

ENTER TO WIN

Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these hallowed pages will receive a Secret Access T-shirt.

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CLASSIC GI

VS.

VIDEO GAMES' FIRST OFFICIAL WAR

From Nintendo neophytes to Sega specialists, the ability and desire to debate the positives of one's preferred gaming system, and the obvious downfalls of the competition, comes as naturally as pressing a reset button. Sometimes a fair comparison between friends, other times a venomous feud based on nothing but personal bias, it seems as long as there is more than one console to choose from, there will always be heated discussions over which is superior. However, long before the merits of Microsoft were put up against the success of Sony, two titans – Atari and Intellivision – were building the video game battlefield where all future wars would take place.

The fashions shown in early '80s video game commercials are as interesting as their console-related content

Although Bally released its Professional Arcade console almost simultaneously with the 2600, and Magnavox's Odyssey 2 appeared a year later, neither of these graphically comparable units could compete with Atari's wide distribution channels and wealth of arcade-to-home conversions. It wasn't until 1980, nearly three years after the 2600 initially became available, that Atari faced some serious competition. Finding amazing success with its line of handheld electronic games, Mattel (at the time, the world's largest toy manufacturer) decided to try its hand at the home video game market. The result was a new company division, Mattel Electronics, and a new console for consumers to contemplate purchasing, the Intellivision.

Priced at $100 more than the Atari 2600, it was clear why Intellivision had a higher asking price from the moment it was turned on. The graphics were crisper, with brighter colors and onscreen characters that were much more detailed. The only drawback to the display's refined appearance was that the games couldn't move at quite as quick a tempo. Knowing this limitation, Intellivision's developers purposefully designed its titles to hide this weakness. Rather than acquire the rights to fast-paced arcade games (like Atari), Mattel Electronics went after sports licenses – such as the NFL, MLB, and NBA. Thanks in part to the keypad built into the controllers, this strategy quickly became a major selling point for the system. Within a year, Intellivision was taking a major chunk out of Atari's console share. Gamers couldn't resist comparing the apples and oranges of these two home video game leaders, but the competitors themselves chose to remain silent. At least, that is, until late 1981.

With the release of its RealSports line, Atari hired professional sports celebrities Billy Martin and Ed "Too Tall" Jones to endorse its games

In the arcade and in the home, video games were a booming business, boasting economic growth that no other sector could match. It was also becoming an increasingly crowded industry. To make their products stand out, software and hardware manufacturers alike purchased an unprecedented amount of television ad time. It was in this media arena that Mattel Electronics chose to officially declare war on Atari.

George Plimpton, famed author of many books which gave readers a first-hand account of what it's like to be a professional athlete, was chosen as Intellivision's TV spokesman. In Mattel's first commercial salvo, the company's new icon talked about what he was known for – sports. Viewers were treated to a look at football and baseball on both Atari and Intellivision, with Plimpton declaring,

Compare for yourself. Atari Baseball (left) and Intellivision Baseball (right)

"If you try them both, I think you'll find the clear winner is Intellivision."

Naturally, Atari didn't let these accusations pass without retaliation. In answer to Mattel's attack on its sports games, Atari released its RealSports line, which gave 2600 owners versions of football and baseball that were far superior to what was previously available. To prove that the RealSports titles were better than anything Intellivision had, professional football player Ed "Too Tall" Jones and baseball manager Billy Martin were hired to endorse the games in commercials. Both took none-too-subtle jabs at George Plimpton as they showed the merits of their respective cartridges by asking, "Who're ya' gonna listen to, anyhow? That other guy who just talks sports, or a nice guy like me who lives it?"

Not only did Intellivision spokesman George Plimpton ask viewers to compare Mattel's sports titles with Atari's...

...he schooled Atari-loving nerds by showing them that Intellivision had better arcade titles as well

To give Mattel Electronics a further taste of its own medicine, Atari produced television ads where a young gamer attempted to compareto compare the 2600's arcade titles to the arcade games from "the other company." When he realized that the competition didn't have any arcade titles, he concluded that, "nobody compares to Atari."

In response, Mattel parodied Atari's ad with a similar-looking gamer who again told the audience that, "nobody compared to Atari." Imagine the kid's surprise when George Plimpton walked up and showed him Intellivision games that weren't only as good, but were better. After being sufficiently berated, the gamer had no choice but to agree that Intellivision was indeed the greater of the two.

This back-and-forth boob tube battle raged on until the video game crash of 1983, when both the bloody competitors threw in the towel. So which one was better? Just like the consoles of today, comparisons seeking a definitive winner come up inconclusive. All systems have their pros and cons, and completely trashing one company's wares is an unfounded and unfair practice – especially if you're the competition.

Before Bob Hoskins and Captain Lou Albano, this unknown actor portrayed Nintendo's mascot in commercials for Mario Bros. game cartridges

THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

Atari kicked off its innovative line of arcade sports titles during this month in 1973 with Football. Depending on the model, Atari Football allowed two or four players to go against each other on a black-and-white field, giving them control over a squad of either Xs or Os. With limited play options and a quarter granting only 90 seconds of game time, Football might have flopped if not for its unique controller, the Trak-ball. The faster the ball spun, the faster your players would run, giving Atari Football a blister-inducing physicality that hadn't been seen in video games. Baseball and Basketball followed, also sporting Trak-ball controllers, but neither was as popular as Football, which pulled in mad money during the pigskin seasons of the late '70s. The Trak-ball remained an arcade staple throughout the '80s, and its inverted cousin, the mouse, comes standard with every computer today.

CLASSIC GI

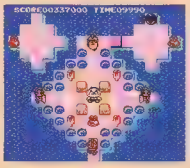
GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Matt Kettel

Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.

KICKLE CUBICLE

■ **FORMAT** NES ■ **PUBLISHER** IREM



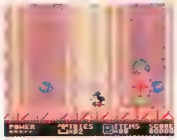
I think the Greatest Game Of All Time, without a doubt, is Kickle Cubicle for the NES. If you've played this game, even for just two minutes, it is humanly impossible to disagree with me. There is an incredible amount of puzzles to solve, ranging from amazingly easy to mind-bendingly hard. Thank God the controls were simple to learn so you could give your full concentration to the puzzle at hand.

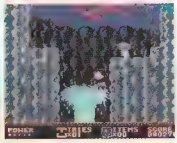
Also, Kickle Cubicle has the best bosses in all of gamedom. When I finally made it to the first boss, Koke, I laughed my butt off – and I still haven't found it yet! And I wasn't laughing so hard because the graphics are a joke. On the contrary, the graphics look a little kiddy, but are actually very good for an NES puzzle game. I laughed because Koke is a fat, one-eyed chicken who squirts a tear when you hit him with an ice block. There are three other bosses that are mad funny to gander at, but y'all will have to play this game to see for yourself. Why are you still reading this? Go out and get Kickle Cubicle to find out why it is the greatest.

GENESIS

CASTLE OF ILLUSION STARRING MICKEY MOUSE

RETRO RATING **9**





Synonymous with 16-bit platformers are gaming mega-stars Mario and Sonic. Often overlooked but also worthy of praise is Mickey Mouse. The Disney posterboy starred in several A-list Genesis and SNES titles, with Castle of Illusion as his initial venture. This game took animation to a new level. Though a bit slow, Mickey moved and acted just like his cinematic counterpart. His tail would sway, and his expression would change. The world around him was equally as detailed, with breathtaking parallax-scrolling backgrounds and whimsical themes. Gameplay itself was none too shabby, either. Mickey could either jump on foes with a double button press, or toss projectiles. The hopping perils were plenty, and great gimmicks like the reversal of gravity (recently duplicated by Wendy: Every Witch Way) and changing level structure kept things interesting. It was a bit on the linear side, but all the components of a great platformer were there. Mano's the man and Sonic is slammin', but don't miss the mouse!

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1990

SEGA CD

POPFUL MAIL

RETRO RATING **9**

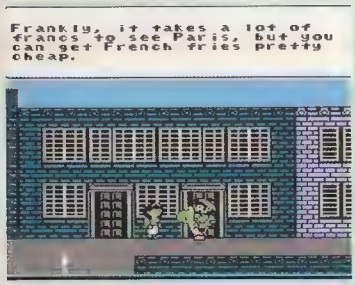
With titles that included Vay, Lunar: Silver Star, and Lunar: Eternal Blue, Working Designs used the Sega CD as its playground for innovation and humor. Popful Mail, one of the company's Ultra Series titles, was the only Working Designs release on the system that wasn't a role-playing game, but that doesn't mean it wasn't a tremendous adventure. A full three hours of spoken dialogue highlighted almost every bit of game text, and anime cinemas were all over the place. The game itself was a side-scrolling platform hack n' slasher. The three playable stars were the bullying bounty hunter, Popful Mail; the timid magician, Tatt; and the goofy bat monster, Gaw. Each had their own unique abilities to fit various situations. Weapons and armor could be upgraded, and items were purchased to refill life in the battlefield. While basic in gameplay, the desire to further the hilarious storyline kept you glued to your Sega CD like few other games in the system's library, and still hauls booty today.

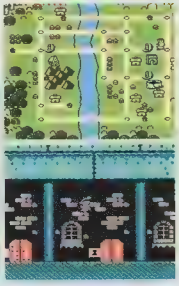
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** WORKING DESIGNS ■ **DEVELOPER** FALCOM
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1995

NES

MARIO IS MISSING!

RETRO RATING **5.5**





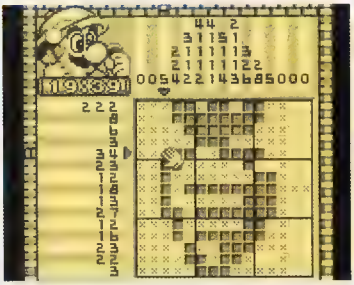
Who says every Mario game is a classic? Along with its sequel, Mario's Time Machine, Mario is Missing is an edutainment title that uses characters from the Mario Bros. series to try to teach kids. This is a geography lesson poorly disguised as an NES cartridge. Mario was captured (quite pathetically) by a Koopa, and now Luigi and Yoshi are trying to save him. It starts out looking like the dungeons of Super Mario World, but each pipe takes you to a different location. You must find out where you are by talking to citizens so Yoshi can join you. You will then beat up the scant Koopas to rescue indigenous artifacts. Return them to certain spots and you'll be asked to answer questions about the city. Get them correct (which is simple, especially when you can guess as many times as you'd like) and Luigi earns some money. For the pre-teen set, this game is slightly more fun than school; but anyone who's walked around a middle school is probably much too smart to get anything out of this bunk scavenger hunt.

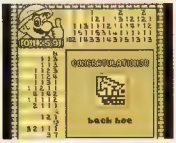
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS ■ **DEVELOPER** RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1993

GAME BOY

MARIO'S PICROSS

RETRO RATING **9.25**





Of all the games on our Top 100 Games of All Time list, Mario's Picross was perhaps the most obscure. It's also very imposing for newbies. As Mario, take a hammer and chisel out pieces of a block grid in order to carve pictures. Numbers along the top and side of the screen will tell you how many squares in a row to hit. If your grid is 10x10 and the left-hand number is 5, five of the ten spaces will be punched out. It's up to you to figure out which ones those are. There are often multiple numbers, such as 10 2 1, which means there are ten in a row, two carved, then a single space to darken. A hint at the beginning of the level gives you one free vertical and horizontal row. Hit the wrong section, and you lose valuable time off the clock. After hitting all the correct spaces, you'll be told what the shape is, be it a shoe, mushroom, or the famous backhoe. The sheer number of stages is staggering, and will keep you occupied for hours upon hours, just like a great puzzle game should. Picross earned its place among gaming's elite.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** JUPITER
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1995

SNES/GENESIS

MORTAL KOMBAT II

After the first Mortal Kombat tournament, the world was thought safe from the tyranny of Shang Tsung and Outworld. The true emperor, upset at Tsung's failure, has taken a more active role in this new kompetition. Twelve warriors, each entering with a hidden agenda. will decide the fate of the universe – and batter as many korpses as possible along the way.

HELPFUL KODES

SNES:

Extra Fatality Time – At the Character Select screen, quickly tap **Up**, **Up**, **Left**, **Up**, **Down**, then hit **Select**. You'll hear the same tone you hear when picking your kombatant.

Fight Jade Immediately – At the Character Select screen, quickly tap **Up**, **Down**, **Down**, **Left**, **Right**, then hit **Select**. You'll hear the same tone you hear when picking your kombatant.

Fight Smoke Immediately – At the Character Select screen, quickly tap **Up**, **Left**, **Up**, **Up**, **Right**, then hit **Select**. You'll hear the same tone you hear when picking your kombatant.

Super Damage/Defense – At the Character Select screen, quickly tap **Down**, **Up**, **Right**, **Up**, **Left**, then hit **Select**. You'll hear the same tone you hear when picking your kombatant.

SEGA GENESIS:

Debug Menu – Go into Start/Options and pick the option menu. Move the kursor to "**Done**" and hit **Left**, **Down**, **Left**, **Right**, **Down**, **Right**, **Left**, **Left**, **Right**, **Right**.

Fergality – To do this weird fatality, go into the debug, make the background **6** and enable "**Ooh Nasty.**" With Raiden as your character, hit **Back**, **Back**, **Block**.

Ping Pong – If you're really bored, try winning 250 straight matches. You'll get a weird version of Pong, then go right on back to normal. Kiss a good two hours of your life goodbye.

LEGEND:

B	Back	**BL**	Block (useful to hold in Fatalities when Up is called for)
F	Forward	**HCB**	Half Circle Backward
U	Up	**HCF**	Half Circle Forward
D	Down	**QCB**	Quarter Circle Backward
HP	High Punch	**QCF**	Quarter Circle Forward
LP	Low Punch		
HK	High Kick		
LK	Low Kick		

BABALITY/FRIENDSHIP

To turn your opponent into a sniveling, krying diaper baby, or to live out Rodney King's dream of just getting along, win the final round without using any punch buttons. Each fighter's button sequences for these are different, so konsult the moves list.

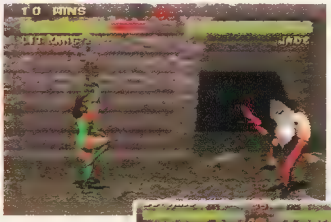
DEAD POOL

An acid bath is just the thing after a spirited battle. To drop a kombatant into the green ooze, hold Low Punch and Low Kick, then execute an uppercut. Splash!

HIDDEN CHARACTERS

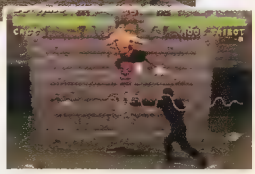
Jade:

This sexy green ninja, who was even included in the Mortal Kombat II movie, can be reached via the stage before the question mark on the tournament tree. In this bout, win using only low kicks. You will then be warped to a tough tussle with the fan-throwing female.



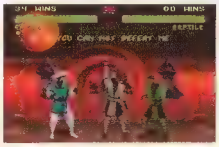
Noob Saibot:

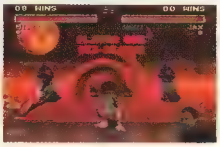
By far the most mysterious fighter in the Mortal Kombat universe, this shadow ninja got his name by mixing and reversing the names of Ed Boon and John Tobias, two of the game's programmers. To fight him, win 25 matches in a row on Genesis, or 50 on SNES.



Smoke:

This gray fighter will randomly taunt you, just like Reptile did in the first MK. Getting to him is a chore. When you do an uppercut, sometimes you get a picture of Dan Forden, and hear "Toasty!" If you can get him to pop up on the Portal stage, quickly hit Down and Start. Now the billowing bad-ass will appear to beat you down.





LUI KANG

High Fireball
F, F, HP

Low Fireball
F, F, LP

Flying Kick

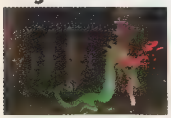
F, F, HK

Bicycle Kick

Charge LK, release

Fatality #1: Cartwheel Kick
Rotate 360°

Fatality #2: Dragon Bite



(Close) D, F, B, B, HK

Babality
D, D, F, B, LK

Friendship

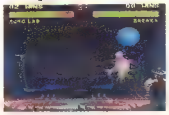
F, B, B, B, LK

Pit
B, F, F, LK

KUNG LAO

Hat Throw
B, F, LP (use U or D to aim hat)

Teleport

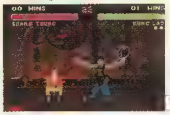


D, U

Dive Kick
D + HK (while in air)

Whirlwind Spin
Hold BL + U, tap LK

Fatality #1: Hat Split



(Sweep distance) F, F, F, LK

Fatality #2: Hat Decap

(Full screen) LP + (B, F), release. Aim hat at head

Babality
B, B, F, F, HK

Friendship

B, B, B, D, HK

Pit
F, F, F, HP

JOHNNY CAGE

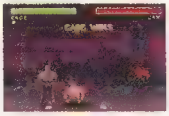
High Green Ball
HCB, HP

Low Green Ball
HCF, LP

Shadow Uppercut
B, D, B, HP

Shadow Kick
B, F, LK

The Nutter



LP + BL

Fatality #1: Torso Toss

(Close) D, D, F, F, LP

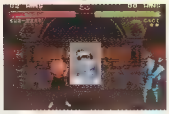
Fatality #2: Decap Punch

(Close) F, F, D, U

Fatality #2.5: 3-Head Decap
(After Decap Punch) D + LP + LK + BL

Babality
B, B, B, HK

Friendship

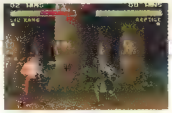


D, D, D, HK

Pit
D, D, D, HK

REPTILE

Acid Spit
F, F, HP



Force Ball

B, B, HP + LP

Invisibility
BL + (U, U, D), HP

Slide
SNES: B + LP + LK + BL
Genesis: B + HK + LK

Fatality #1: Tongue Shot

(Half Screen) B, B, D, LP

Fatality #2: Invisible Homicide

While invisible, (close) F, F, D, HK

Babality
D, D, B, B, LK

Friendship
B, B, D, LK

Pit
D, D, F, F, BL

SUB-ZERO

Deep Freeze

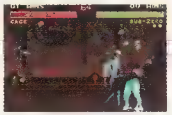
QCF, LP

Ice Patch

QCB, LK

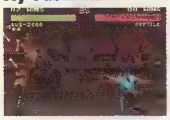
Slide
SNES: B + LP + LK + BL
Genesis: B + HK + LK

Fatality #1: Ice Breaker



(Sweep) F, F, D, HK

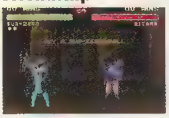
Fatality #2: Icy Fastball



(Full screen) LP + (B, B, D, F), Release

Babality
D, B, B, HK

Friendship



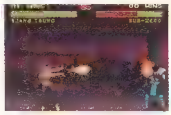
B, B, D, HK

Pit
D, F, F, BL

SHANG TSUNG

One Fireball
B, B, HP

Two Fireballs



B, B, F, HP

Three Fireballs
B, B, F, F, HP

Morphs:
Lui Kang – B, F, F, BL
Kung Lao – B, D, B, HK
Johnny Cage – B, B, D, LP
Reptile – BL + (U, D), HP
Sub-Zero – F, D, F, HP
Kitana – BL, BL, BL
Jax – D, F, B, HK
Mileena – Charge HP
Baraka – D, D, LK
Scorpion – BL + (U, U), Release
Raiden – D, B, F, LK

Fatality #1: Soul Stealer
(Close) U, D, U, LK

Fatality #2: Possession
(Sweep) Charge HK

Fatality #3: Kintaro Morph

(Sweep) Charge LP for 25 seconds

Babality
B, F, D, HK

Friendship

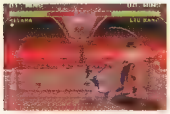
B, B, D, F, HK

Pit
BL + (D, D, U), D

KITANA

Fan Throw
F, F, HP + LP

Fan Lift



B, B, B, HP

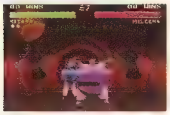
Superhero Punch
HCB, HP

Fan Slice
B + HP

Fatality #1: Fan Decap

(Close) BL, BL, BL, HK

Fatality #2: Kiss of Death



(Close) LK + (F, F, D, F), release

Babality
D, D, D, LK

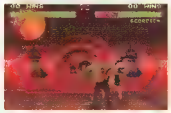
Friendship

D, D, D, U, LK

Pit
F, D, F, HK

JAX

Gotcha Grab



F, F, LP, rapid LP

Multiple Powerslam
F + LP, rapid HP

Energy Wave
HCB, HK

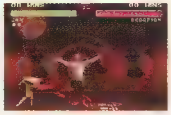
Ground Pound
Charge LK

Backbreaker
BL in air

Fatality #1: Head Smasher

(Sweep) LP + (F, F, F), release

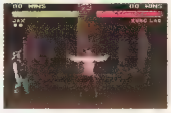
Fatality #2: Arm Rip



(Sweep) BL, BL, BL, BL, LP

Babality
D, U, D, U, LK

Friendship

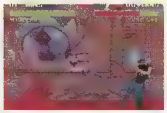


D, D, U, U, LK

Pit
U, U, D, LK

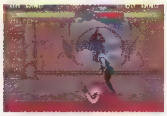
MILEENA

Sai Shot



Charge HP

Roll Attack



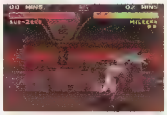
B, B, D, HK

Teleport Kick
F, F, LK

Fatality #1: Sai Smackdown

(Close) F, B, F, LP

Fatality #2: Eat This



(Close) Charge HK

Babality
D, D, D, HK

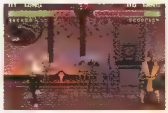
Friendship

D, D, D, U, HK

Pit
F, D, F, LK

BARAKA

Spark Shot



QCB, HP

Blade Slice
B + HP

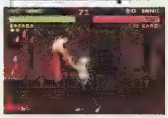
Shredder

B, B, B, LP

Fatality #1: Decapitation

(Close) B, B, B, B, HP

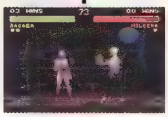
Fatality #2: Barak the Impaler



(Close) B, F, D, F, LP

Babality
F, F, F, HK

Friendship

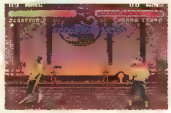


U, F, F, HK

Pit
F, F, D, HK

SCORPION

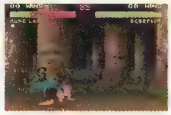
Harpoon



B, B, LP

Teleport Punch
QCB, HP

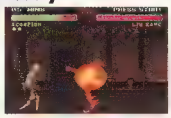
Leg-Scissor Takedown



HCB, LK

Air Throw
BL in air

Fatality #1: Toasty



D, D, U, U, HP

Fatality #2: Incinerate
(Half screen) U, U, HP

Fatality #3: Two For One

(Close) HP + (F, D, F, F, F)

Babality
D, B, B, HK

Friendship
B, B, D, HK

Pit
D, F, F, BL

RAIDEN

Torpedo

B, B, F

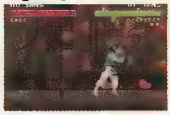
Shocking Pick-Up
Charge HP

Lightning Bolt

QCF, LP

Teleport
D, U

Fatality #1: Big Zap



(Close) Charge LK 5 seconds, rapid LK + BL

Fatality #2: Uppercut of the Gods
(Close) Charge HP 7 seconds

Babality
D, D, U, HK

Friendship

D, B, F, HK

Pit
U, U, U, HP

ETC

THE LORD OF THE RINGS ACTION FIGURES

Manufacturer: Toy Biz • Website: www.toybiz.com
List Price: $7.99 to $19.99

In an interesting twist of licensing fate, when The Lord of the Rings comes to theaters this December, there will be more than one set of official action figures for rabid fans to make battle dioramas with. Toy Vault's two-year-old Middle-Earth line is based on Tolkien's books, while Toy Biz's soon-to-be-released figs are specifically modeled to look like the characters presented in New Line Cinema's upcoming trilogy. Both lines have a similar level of detail and accessories, but the Toy Biz models have action features (such as the classic squeeze the legs to make the sword arm go up and down) and are cheaper. Toy Vault has the advantage of presenting more characters and a Frodo who doesn't look like Elijah Wood. Hmm, guess we'll call this one a draw.

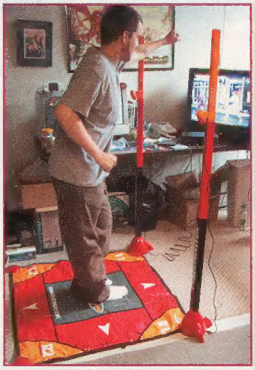
MIDDLE-EARTH ACTION FIGURES

Manufacturer: Toy Vault
Website: www.toyvault.com
List Price: $12.95 to $21.95

CLUE: DUNGEONS & DRAGONS EDITION

Manufacturer: USAopoly
Website: www.usaopoly.com • List Price: $29.95

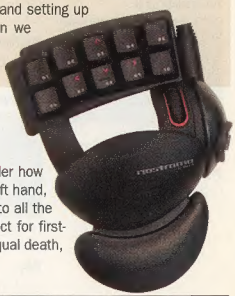
Remember when parents used to fear their children playing Dungeons & Dragons? Sigh, those were good times, huh? Now D&D is fun for the whole family in this special edition of Clue. Designed by USAopoly, the same people who have made Monopoly sets based on everything from Coca-Cola to The Simpsons, this is a standard Clue game with adventurers and magic items mixed in. Once the thrill of saying "I think it was Mialee the Wizard in the Lost Crypt with the Vorpal Sword" wears off, you can try the optional monster encounter rules. After that five minutes of fun is over, you can put this on your nerd oddity shelf next to your D&D Trivia game.



FIGHTINGARENA

Manufacturer: Thrustmaster
Website: www.thrustmaster.com • List Price: $79.99

Call it the U-Force for the new millennium. Call it the Activator 2K1. Call it an expensive way to make yourself look like an even bigger idiot than you already are. Just don't call it a PlayStation 2 peripheral for those with a low lung capacity. The FightingArena takes games to a physical level by asking you to punch and kick through infrared beams it starts blazing around you. When you break a beam, an appropriate button is pressed. Are you so addicted to Dance Dance Revolution that you want all your games to be a sweat-inducing experience? Then maybe this is for you. Be forewarned, however – we spent more time unpacking and setting up the FightingArena than we did actually using it.



NOSTROMO N50 SPEEDPAD

Manufacturer: Belkin • Website: www.belkin.com
List Price: $29.95

Here's an item you don't need, but once you get it, you'll wonder how you ever got along without it. The SpeedPad is meant for your left hand, while you use the mouse with your right. You then have access to all the hotkey action without ever having to touch the keyboard. Perfect for first-person shooters and any other PC game where slow reactions equal death, the SpeedPad is a peripheral worth getting acquainted with.

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Nintendo GameCube.™ Born to Play.

FULL-FRONTAL FEAR.

Celebrate the 5th anniversary of the most terrifying game series ever as it mutates onto the PlayStation® 2 computer entertainment system. Join Claire Redfield, as she searches for her missing brother, Chris, and dig deeper into the evil doings of Umbrella Corporation. Flesh eating zombies and bio-tech monstrosities haunt your every move. As an added bonus, this special edition includes never-before-seen cut scenes and an interactive demo of the highly anticipated, Devil May Cry.

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Blood and Gore
Violence

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: Veronica X

DEVIL MAY CRY BONUS DEMO INCLUDED

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PlayStation®2